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## THESIS

THE UNITED STATES IN THE FRAMEWORK  
OF ASEAN SECURITY: POST-COLD WAR  
PROSPECTS AND ALTERNATIVES

by

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June 1991

Thesis Advisor:

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**The United States in the Framework of ASEAN Security:  
Post-Cold War Prospects and Alternatives**

by

**Robert Andrew Stoufer  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
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**Submitted in partial fulfillment  
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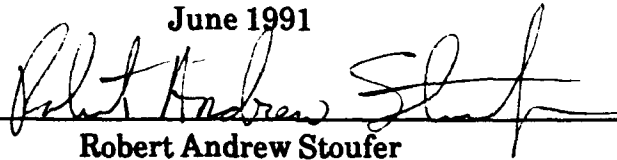
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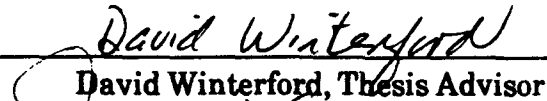
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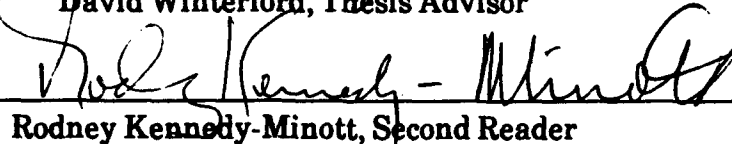
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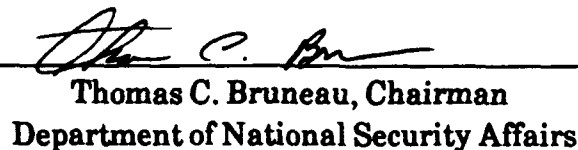
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of the United States in the framework of ASEAN security in the post-Cold War world. Toward that end, the thesis examines the evolution of U.S. involvement in the political-economic-military development of the states that came together as ASEAN. It then seeks to identify the components of America's security strategy for the region relevant to the post-Cold War environment and, therefore, necessary in developing a New World Order policy for the U.S. position in Southeast Asia. Central arguments include: the U.S. military presence is critical to the region's security; Japanese participation through continued economic penetration with ASEAN is an essential cornerstone of the regional security picture; the potential for regional destabilization may be heightened as a result of declining East-West confrontation; and, ASEAN's inability to act jointly in defense of regional security and stability will necessitate an on-going U.S. military presence in order to safeguard key sea lanes and trans-shipment points.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| I. INTRODUCTION.....  | 1  |
| II. THE UNITED STATES AND SECURITY AND STABILITY IN<br>SOUTHEAST ASIA.....                          | 8  |
| A. THE UNITED STATES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:<br>THE ROOTS OF COMMITMENT.....                             | 10 |
| 1. The United States as Liberator.....  | 10 |
| 2. The Onset of the Cold War.....   | 15 |
| B. CHANGING STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:<br>THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SOVIET THREAT..... | 20 |
| 1. The Emergence of ASEAN.....  | 20 |
| 2. The Nixon Doctrine: No More Vietnams.....  | 23 |
| 3. The Ford Doctrine: Still a Pacific Power.....  | 24 |
| 4. Redefining U.S. Security Interests in<br>Southeast Asia.....                                     | 26 |
| 5. Active "Defense": The Maritime Strategy.....   | 32 |
| 6. ASEAN and the Maritime Strategy.....   | 34 |
| III. DEALING WITH JAPAN: THE PRICE PAID FOR ECONOMIC<br>DEVELOPMENT.....                            | 38 |
| IV. "THREATS" TO ASEAN SECURITY.....  | 47 |
| A. INSURGENT GROUPS/RELIGIOUS SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS....  | 48 |
| B. INTRA-ASEAN CONCERNS.....  | 49 |
| C. EXTRA-ASSOCIATION CONCERNS.....  | 50 |
| V. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN ASEAN STATES: PROSPECTS<br>FOR A COLLECTIVE SECURITY REGIME.....     | 57 |
| A. INDEPENDENCE AND TURMOIL.....  | 60 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| B. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS.....          | 67  |
| 1. Thailand.....                          | 68  |
| 2. Indonesia.....                         | 69  |
| 3. Malaysia.....                          | 70  |
| 4. Singapore.....                         | 71  |
| 5. Philippines.....                       | 72  |
| C. EVOLUTION OF DEFENSE ORIENTATIONS..... | 74  |
| D. ARMS PROCUREMENT.....                  | 77  |
| E. MILITARY INTERRELATIONSHIPS.....       | 80  |
| VI. CONCLUSION.....                       | 86  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....                         | 99  |
| INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST.....            | 104 |

## I. INTRODUCTION

For the duration of the Cold War, the United States was the actor primarily responsible for creating and giving substance to a world-wide system of formal and informal security alliances whose explicit goal was containing and deterring the spread of Soviet-sponsored communism. Indeed, during the period of East-West confrontation, the Superpower status of the United States was largely defined by its ability to use its political, economic, and military resources to sustain and direct the disparate elements of its security network. "Containment" strategy appeared to be a global, coordinated plan only because the United States, having a world-wide span of interests, was the common denominator wherever the strategy was employed. However, the means through which containment was achieved varied depending upon the particular circumstances of the region in which the strategy was implemented. Significantly, on only two occasions did the United States take up arms and engage in protracted warfare in defense of its containment principles--both in Asia; one instance ending in success, the other in failure.

The American involvement in Korea was a watershed for the United States as it was the first test of U.S. resolve to uphold its pledge to contain Soviet-sponsored communism. The United States' experience in Vietnam was also a watershed for U.S. strategists as it brought the country face to face with the limitations of American military power and its resolve to use it. However, containment strategy encompassed more than achieving military preponderance over the Soviet adversary or its client states. An equally critical component of the strategy, and perhaps the most important gauge of its success, was the fostering and nurturing of nascent, Western-oriented polities and economies. Toward that end, the U.S. achieved great success in Southeast Asia, paradoxically, the site of its greatest military failure.

The United States, with the concomitant support of Japan and others, has been a vitally important component of the drive in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations<sup>1</sup> (ASEAN) to ensure regional stability and to build dynamic, export-oriented economies. Through free trade/open market policies, development assistance, and perhaps most significantly, benevolent military hegemony, the United States has, and

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<sup>1</sup>The Association was formed in August 1967. Its charter members were Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines. Brunei became a member in 1984.



continues to play a major role in creating conditions favorable to economic growth in ASEAN.

Today, however, the impetus to reevaluate our presence and role in the region is generally two-fold and gathering momentum. In the first place, the ending of the Cold War removes or at least dramatically minimizes the perception of threat imposed by the Soviet Union or its surrogates to the region. Secondly, the growing U.S. trade imbalance with most of the ASEAN states, as well as other Asia-Pacific nations, has elicited more strident calls from the U.S. Congress to adjust the level of our presence in the region vis a vis our "allies,"<sup>2</sup> i.e., more equitable burden sharing of the responsibility for the area's security. Conversely, the easing of U.S.-Soviet relations should open the eyes of those calling for a dramatic change in the forward defense strategy, based as it is on Cold War calculations, to a wider spectrum of potentially volatile national and regional security issues that have been subdued by the over arching U.S.-USSR global competition. In this regard, the United States may find itself in a Catch-22 as it gropes for a new policy in the Asia-Pacific region. Is the U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia, coupled with its national economic policy, an indispensable instrument in effecting regional stability and

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<sup>2</sup>Both formal alliance partners as well as those with whom we have developed tacit security relationships.

economic growth? The deployment of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia has certainly been a critical element in establishing the framework within which the significant Japanese penetration into ASEAN economies has occurred. Indeed, from the ASEAN perspective, Japanese "access" in the region has been predicated upon a strong U.S. military presence. If the United States abandons the immediate region militarily and/or enacts protectionist trade policies, will latent ethnic or regional hostilities emerge, compounding the internal security problems already facing most of the ASEAN governments, sending their economies into a tailspin? Would a dramatic reordering of the U.S. force structure in Southeast Asia create the proverbial "power vacuum," thereby inviting potential aspirants to regional hegemony, such as India, China, Japan, or even Indonesia, to "test the waters?"

Clearly, any new U.S. initiatives regarding its post-Cold War role in Southeast Asia must be calculated with regard to their potential ramifications both in terms of their impact on U.S. national interests, but also on the individual and collective interests of the ASEAN states. Of course, it is difficult, even in a static environment, to predict or quantify the long-range outcome of any of the myriad policy options available to U.S. policymakers seeking to further the national interest. The dynamic nature of the post-Cold War world would only seem to compound the problem confronted by

American strategists. However, the preeminent position of the United States in the community of nations in the post-Cold War/post-Gulf War world provides its policymakers with unprecedented latitude in terms of potential options as they seek to develop a strategy that will define America's role in the New World Order (NWO).

An examination of America's global interests is beyond the scope of this work. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the political, economic, and military considerations that U.S. strategists must address in defining America's New World Order role in the framework of Southeast Asian, and specifically ASEAN security. It will examine the evolution of the role that the United States has played in promoting the security and stability of the ASEAN states. It will look at key motives which have influenced the development of our position in the region, including the rise and fall of the Soviet threat and the fiscal constraints which are now forcing us to reevaluate the efficacy of longstanding defense and economic policies. Several points will be underscored. First, the United States' "security relationship" with the ASEAN states has been derivative of its global containment strategy, yet has now developed a strategic and economic significance exclusive of Cold War considerations. Second, the military and economic components of the relationship--including Japanese participation--have been and will continue to be

indivisible. Third, many of the factors and assumptions which underlaid the U.S. commitment to and defined its role in the relationship have evolved and taken on new significance or been overcome by events. The composite argument or theme presented is that the strategic considerations which gave shape to and defined the role of the U.S. in Southeast Asia have changed due to post-Cold War realities; the effect of these changes, however, may be more destabilizing in terms of potential threat scenarios. The United States has then, deep and abiding interests, military and economic, for remaining an active participant in the framework of Southeast Asian security.<sup>3</sup> Addressing these interests in Cold War terms may result in wasteful and ultimately, exhaustive expenditures of U.S. resources, and an exacerbation of its chronic economic difficulties. Conversely, failure to address these interests in the circumstances of the post-cold War may lead to the destabilization of the region. The problem is, therefore, one of management; the task being to integrate the ambitions and concerns of the actors involved, yet still maintain a stable, economically viable environment.

Opportunities, however, now exist for recalibrating the basis upon which U.S. policy toward Southeast Asia had

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<sup>3</sup>Militarily, U.S. access in the region proved indispensable during the build-up of forces prior to the war against Iraq. Economically, the U.S. was one of the top three trade partners in both imports and exports of all the ASEAN states.

previously been formulated. What path lies ahead? What are our interests in the region? What might be the ramifications of a U.S. withdrawal from the area? Can the ASEAN states act together to ensure regional stability and harmony? Should the United States' agenda emphasize defense or economics? Can we reconcile the seemingly contradictory desires to satisfy both our interest in remaining economically competitive vis-a-vis the ASEAN states (not to mention Japan), and our goal of providing an environment conducive to developing viable market economies? Are these two goals mutually exclusive? This thesis seeks to answer some of the more pressing questions.

## **II. THE UNITED STATES AND SECURITY AND STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

The genesis of the U.S. commitment to security and stability in Southeast Asia was the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay by Admiral George Dewey's East Asia Squadron. The explicit rationale for such a bold strike against the Asian stronghold of Spain's colonial empire was retaliation for the heinous "attack" against the USS MAINE at Havana harbor. However, for then Under Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, the man who ordered the attack, the implicit motive was to secure the valuable Philippine port at Manila, strategically located as it was for access to the important China market. As well, men like Roosevelt, his strategist, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and others who believed in America's Manifest Destiny shared a common vision of the country's future; a future in which the "less developed" civilizations in Asia and Latin America would benefit from the spread of U.S. influence. In a sense, the idea of a Manifest Destiny was almost a "burden" to those men who sought to extend America's influence abroad. To them, the defeat of the Spanish and the taking of the Philippines was akin to a challenge to national self-righteousness. Certainly, few nations have ever taken an easier step toward fulfilling their

destiny. "When Dewey arrived at Manila Bay,... he discovered seven armorless Spanish vessels. ... Dewey then destroyed the Spanish flotilla, killing or wounding 400 men. No U.S. ship was badly hit, and only several Americans received scratches. After four hours of cannon fire, the United States had become a power in the Western Pacific."<sup>4</sup>

It is perhaps one of the bitter ironies of America's historical experience that its coming of age as a power in Southeast Asia was remarkably easy and bore little cost, yet its tenure as a power in the region has proved to be extremely arduous and very costly. Indeed, the ease with which Admiral Dewey dispatched the Spanish fleet proved to be no harbinger of things to come even as the United States set out to pacify the Filipino insurrection. Ultimately, the price paid by the United States to establish its position in the Philippines bought an even deeper commitment to the region in general, one consequence of which has been war with the Japanese and North Vietnamese, as well as the protracted Cold War with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>4</sup>Walter LaFeber, The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 193.

**A. THE UNITED STATES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE ROOTS OF COMMITMENT**

**1. The United States as Liberator**

The argument has been put forth that if not for commercial interests in Asia, the United States might very well have avoided war against the Japanese in World War II.<sup>5</sup> Such reasoning implies America went to war against the Japanese in order either to further its own economic position or at least return to the status quo ante. Acceptance of the "commercial interests" rationale as the underlying cause of America's eventual participation in the conflict belies the fact that economically, the United States was a bit player in the region and, as per the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934<sup>6</sup>, was in the process of shedding its sole colonial possession in the area. What was most critical in bringing the United States to war with Japan was Japan's reaction to the economic sanctions we levied against it as a result of its militaristic drive to establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. "[T]he Japanese decision to go to war with the United States in 1941 was a direct result of America's total embargo on sales of oil

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<sup>5</sup>June Teufel Dreyer, "Regional Security in Asia and the Pacific," in Asian-Pacific Regional Security, ed. June Teufel Dreyer (Washington, D.C.: Washington Press Institute, 1990), 3.

<sup>6</sup>This Act of Congress promised Philippine independence in ten years.



and other items to Japan."<sup>7</sup> Of course, it would be purely speculative to attempt to divine whether or not war would have been inevitable had the Japanese not attacked U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor. What is beyond speculation though was the level of determination, once the war started, of the United States to drive the Japanese back to their homeland.

During the course of the war, the Allied powers did considerable planning for the peace that would follow their victory. However, unlike Northeast Asia or Europe, Southeast Asia did not figure prominently in those post-war plans.<sup>8</sup> Before America's initial involvement in the actual fighting of the war, the closest thing to a vision for the future, to include Southeast Asia, was found in the Atlantic Charter: the agreement on war aims between Churchill and Roosevelt which essentially called for self-determination and equality for all nations.<sup>9</sup> As the war raged on however, it became more important to demonstrate allied solidarity even if it meant giving tacit support to the preservation of colonial empires. The most the United States could do unilaterally in support of the spirit of the Charter was to follow through on its

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<sup>7</sup>Dreyer, "Regional Security in Asia and the Pacific," 3.

<sup>8</sup>Russell H. Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia: The Roots of Commitment (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1973), 36.

<sup>9</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 380-1.

pledge to grant the Philippines independence once the war was won.

Perhaps as a result of the destruction suffered at home by America's European allies, by 1943 Roosevelt saw in Southeast Asia "the domino theory when it came to one country winning independence from a European power."<sup>10</sup> He believed the forces of nationalism at work in the region would prove too strong to long stay repressed under the burden of severely weakened colonial administrations. As the war in the Pacific drew to a close, the necessity of formulating a posture statement on the goals of the United States in the region became more important, especially in light of the leadership change caused by Roosevelt's untimely death. Towards that end, a draft memorandum for President Truman prepared by the State Department summarized Roosevelt's stance as follows:

President Roosevelt recognized the future increasing importance to the United States of Southeast Asia. He saw the necessity of aiding the 150,000,000 people there to achieve improved social, economic and political standards. He realized that dynamic forces leading toward self-government are growing in Asia; that the United States--as a great democracy--cannot and must not try to retard this development but rather act in harmony with it; and that social, economic and political instability in the area may threaten the

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<sup>10</sup>Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia, 36.

peace and stability of the Far East and indeed the world.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, America's experience in fighting the war in the Pacific, the plodding island hopping campaign and ultimately, the occupation of Japan, did much to enhance the awareness of America's senior political and military officials to the nationalism pervasive among many of the indigenous elites. The problem of allied colonial possessions though, persisted after Japan's defeat, contrary to Roosevelt's desire to see America's example in the Philippines emulated by the other extraregional powers. An early indication in the post-Roosevelt era that the British, French, and Dutch had little interest in abdicating their colonial positions occurred at Potsdam where Churchill successfully increased the boundaries of Lord Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, the United States often sided against its former allies as it pushed for decolonialization; a factor which later contributed to the reservoir of goodwill enjoyed by the United States with the ASEAN states.<sup>13</sup> However, because of its initial aversion to becoming embroiled in Southeast Asia's

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<sup>11</sup>Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia, 37, citing United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967, Study Prepared by the Department of Defense, Book 8, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1971, pp. 13-14.

<sup>12</sup>Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia, 50.

<sup>13</sup>Bilveer Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," Asian Defence Journal, (April 1989): 53.

"Colonial Wars,"<sup>14</sup> and its more pressing political concerns with the occupation of Japan and the emerging civil war in China, America's position in the region was somewhat ambivalent and came to be de-emphasized in Washington. To be sure, the U.S. did have some success as it pressured the Dutch to resolve their war in Indonesia in terms favorable to the independence movement, but on the whole, the U.S. policy tended toward disengaged but concerned interest.

The granting of independence to the Philippines on 4 July 1946, cleared the way for the United States to distance itself from the growing imbroglio in Southeast Asia and concentrate its efforts in Northeast Asia where the problems of civil war in China and occupation in Japan took center stage. However, the United States did not completely divest itself of responsibility to its former colonial possession. To ensure that the fledgling independent Republic of the Philippines was given every opportunity to develop under autonomous rule, a number of legislative actions were taken by the U.S. to accord the Philippines military and economic assistance. "Military arrangements between the United States and the Philippines were made in the agreement on bases signed March 14, 1947, and that on military assistance concluded a week later. These arrangements were not predicated on a U.S.

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<sup>14</sup>The French in Indochina and the Dutch in Indonesia primarily.

military role in the rest of Southeast Asia."<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, just two days prior to the signing of the bases agreement, President Truman delivered his famous speech to Congress in which he outlined the tenets of the so-called "Truman Doctrine."<sup>16</sup> Certainly, as the world moved closer to bi-polarization, the significance that the Philippine bases would have in U.S. policy during the Cold War could not have been anticipated by even the most forward looking security strategist.

## 2. The Onset of the Cold War

Truman's Doctrine provided the ideological framework upon which the Cold War was to be founded.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.<sup>17</sup>

Ironically, the Doctrine, which was a response to events in Europe, was more applicable, as a baseline from which U.S. Cold War policy would be formulated, to the Asian theater

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<sup>15</sup>Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia, 74.

<sup>16</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 453.

<sup>17</sup>The Management of Security Assistance, Study Prepared by the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, Wright-Patterson AFB, 1980, 1-18.

where nationalism was rapidly coalescing into viable movements than to Europe where the boundaries had, for all intents and purposes, become part of the status quo. Although the motives contained in the Doctrine may have been altruistic--especially with regard to supporting "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation"--they were quickly qualified in Cold War terms--nationalism often became synonymous with communism; a factor which served to color U.S. perceptions of the struggle in Indochina.<sup>18</sup>

The "loss" of China to the communists and the first test of a Soviet atomic bomb in 1949 caused President Truman to call for "a single, comprehensive statement of interests, threats, and feasible responses ..." that could serve to guide U.S. foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> The result was NSC-68. That document postulated that the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was a zero-sum game where "any substantial further extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin with greater strength could be assembled.... the assault on free institutions is worldwide now, and in the context of the present polarization of power

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<sup>18</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 494.

<sup>19</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982), 90.

a defeat for free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere."<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the articulation of the Truman Doctrine, the events of 1949, and the drafting of NSC-68, the future role of the United States in Asia, and the world for that matter, was problematic; to what extent and where should the power and resources available to the U.S. be used to shape the direction of the post-war world? The Marshall Plan was one answer, but it was directed at Europe. The invasion of South Korea by Soviet-backed North Korean forces in June of 1950 validated the premises of NSC-68 in the minds of many American strategists and made the issue of expanding the U.S. role in Asia, as well as elsewhere, not a question of should we, but rather, how should we and how much. The resulting policy manifested itself in a series of security pacts constructed by Dean Acheson, as Truman's Secretary of State, and John Foster Dulles, as Eisenhower's.

In Southeast Asia, the magnet which attracted the bulk of U.S. concern was Vietnam. Having successfully, at least for the near term, defeated the insurgent forces in the Philippines, and with the British in control in Malaya, U.S. Southeast Asian strategists devoted their attention to, if not defeating, then at least containing the nationalist/communist

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<sup>20</sup>Gaddis, Strategies, 91., citing NSC-68, April 14, 1950, FR: 1950, I, 238, 240.

insurgency being led in Vietnam by Ho Chi Minh, "a Moscow-trained Communist."<sup>21</sup> Vietnam, and therefore, Southeast Asia, became critical in terms of their importance to the position of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. The reasoning, however, was rather convoluted:

Southeast Asia ... had both the strategic materials (such as oil and tin) and locations (for air and naval bases) that the West required for its cold-war build-up. The area seemed especially important because, in American eyes, its markets and raw materials were necessary for Japan's stability. If Southeast Asia became Communist, a top-secret National Security Council paper concluded, it could mean 'Japan's eventual accommodation to Communism.' Eisenhower later finished that thought: 'Should Japan go communist (in fact or in sympathy) the U.S. would be out of the Pacific, and it [i.e., the Pacific] would become a communist lake.'<sup>22</sup>

To counter this "falling domino" principle, the United States followed two parallel policy paths. First, massive amounts of aid were poured into the French attempt to defeat Ho's forces. Of course, after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the U.S. took more direct control of the effort to defeat the communist insurgency including determining the political leadership in South Vietnam, sending in military advisors, and ultimately escalating its combat military presence to over 500,000 troops as fighting intensified in the

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<sup>21</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 494.

<sup>22</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 520., citing "Legislative Leadership Meeting, June 21, 1954, Supplementary Notes," Legislative Meetings Series, Box 4, Eisenhower Library.



late 1960's.<sup>23</sup> Second, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was formed in 1954. As a barometer of Southeast Asian unity against the communist threat though, "SEATO" was really a misnomer as only two of the independent Southeast Asian nations were signatories to the treaty: Thailand and the Philippines. The other signatories, the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand, were all extraregional actors with either active or post-colonial interests in the region.

For the United States, the object of SEATO was:

to safeguard the independence of countries in the region against the imminent danger of communist invasion. The approach was overtly military, undertaken at two levels: (1) to safeguard the military security of Southeast Asian countries against Communism by strengthening their military power and capacity; and (2) to extend the mantle of US military power over the region. The Americans also understood the close relationship between communist threat and the political, social and economic problems and hence strove, behind the protective US shield, to resolve these problems.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, SEATO established the framework upon which U.S. policies "were to shape Southeast Asia's political, economic and military map for the next four decades" would be based.<sup>25</sup>

Although U.S. policy in Vietnam may have become overly influenced and defined in terms of the exigencies of the

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<sup>23</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 522-25, 561-565, 577-586.

<sup>24</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 54.

<sup>25</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 53.

global Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union, there can be little doubt that the commitment made to the region because of that global perspective served to improve the "positions" of what were to become the ASEAN states. As Bilveer Singh says of that commitment: "...it permitted the countries there to develop and strengthen themselves--in short, they gained valuable breathing space; ASEAN countries also benefitted economically from the war boom. At the same time, however, a clear ideological line was drawn in Southeast Asia."<sup>26</sup>

**B. CHANGING STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SOVIET THREAT**

**1. The Emergence of ASEAN**

In August 1967, near the height of the Vietnam War and less than a year before the Tet Offensive, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established. The primary motivation for establishing ASEAN was generated ultimately from two important considerations: 1)"the belief that local disputes were wasteful and self-defeating"<sup>27</sup>; and 2)the fear that disunity among their number would increase the probability of their being drawn into the potentially destabilizing vortex created by Great Power rivalry in

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<sup>26</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 54.

<sup>27</sup>Sheldon W. Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," Asian Survey 39, no. 6 (June 1989): 580.

Indochina.<sup>28</sup> As well, the Association sought to foster economic cooperation among its members and to speak with a common voice in the Association's economic and political relations with outside actors.<sup>29</sup> It was felt that "[P]olitical consultation to resolve local problems and to present a unified front against external challenges would enhance the ability of each state to ensure its own integrity."<sup>30</sup> Equally critical to the charter memberstates was a recognition and acceptance that the success or failure of their attempt was dependent upon the beneficence of extraregional actors--primarily the United States and Japan.

In terms of security then, there was a willingness among the members, Indonesia excepted, to rely upon the strength of friendly outside powers, particularly for external defense. On the positive side, this stance has helped maintain a semblance of unity among the members as none of their number achieved a preponderance of power in the region. Additionally, not unlike the situation in Japan, the "forfeiture" of the responsibility for external defense to an extraregional actor allowed for increased emphasis to be

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<sup>28</sup>Sheldon W. Simon, "The United States and Conflict Resolution in Southeast Asia," Contemporary Southeast Asia (September 1990): 87.

<sup>29</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 581.

<sup>30</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 580.

directed toward internal development. On the negative side, "[T]he absence of a strong military component in ASEAN affairs meant that all the Association could offer a threatened member would be diplomatic solidarity."<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the U.S. interest in Southeast Asia, outside of its obligation to the Philippines, grew out of a Cold War perspective that viewed the region as an integral part of the Japanese security equation. The importance of Japan to the United States grew dramatically in the aftermath of the invasion of South Korea when it became a key component of its Asia-Pacific containment strategy. Since Japan's security depended, in large part, on industrial development which required access to Southeast Asian resources, Southeast Asia, by implication, became an area of increasing concern to U.S. strategists.

Of course, the U.S. became more intimately involved with the region as American participation in the deepening mire in Vietnam grew. Over time, American interests in the region naturally expanded and came to be interpreted not just in relation to its value and importance to the security of Japan, but also in terms of its economic and strategic value to the United States. Today, "American interests in ASEAN stem from the population size of its memberstates, the

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<sup>31</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 581.

importance of raw materials, especially strategic and energy resources, the region's importance for investments and market outlets, the presence of strategic waterways, the ideological orientation of the regimes and the treaty commitments with two of the countries, namely Thailand and the Philippines."<sup>32</sup>

## **2. The Nixon Doctrine: No More Vietnams**

As a response to the growing difficulties in which American forces found themselves in Vietnam, the Nixon Doctrine was proclaimed in 1969. It called for "the transfer of immediate self-defense responsibilities to indigenous forces while the U.S. would provide material and economic support assistance."<sup>33</sup> The resultant drawdown of forces saw that "[B]y late 1972, he[Nixon] had pulled out all but 3,000 U.S. troops from Vietnam as well as one-third of the 60,000 American soldiers in South Korea, 12,000 from Japan, and 16,000 from Thailand."<sup>34</sup> In part, it was the evolution of the U.S. perspective of its interests in Southeast Asia that allowed its relations with the ASEAN states to endure the radical change in the U.S. posture after the proclamation of the Doctrine and the subsequent removal of forces. There

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<sup>32</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 55.

<sup>33</sup>The Management of Security Assistance, 1-32.

<sup>34</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 605.

were, however, grave concerns among the ASEAN states about what a reduced U.S. presence in the region would mean.

Japanese economic intrusion into Southeast Asia had grown considerably by this time and a rapid U.S. withdrawal from the region sparked fears of renewed Japanese hegemony. These fears were manifested in the widespread rioting in several of the ASEAN states during Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka's tour of Southeast Asia in 1974. American strategists thus confronted an emerging dilemma: Japanese economic interaction in the ASEAN states was deemed crucial to their internal stability and continued Western political orientation, yet clearly, Japan's presence was unacceptable without a U.S. "buffer." U.S. policymakers needed to enunciate a strategy that would assuage the fears of the ASEAN states that they were being abandoned by the U.S. security umbrella. However, the motivation to define a new Pacific Strategy was not entirely a response to the concerns of American allies and trading partners in the region.

### **3. The Ford Doctrine: Still a Pacific Power**

The American experience in Vietnam, culminating in the failed last-ditch effort to save the Saigon regime in April of 1975, took a toll on the pride and confidence of the United States. Deeply felt notions of U.S. infallibility were dealt a severe blow; the confidence if not self-righteousness which the United States carried into Manila Bay in 1898 began to

erode seriously as people began to question America's goals and intentions in the Asia-Pacific region. And yet, the evolution of U.S. interests in the region, having grown to encompass commercial as well as military and security considerations, made "abandoning" the region untenable.

Thus, in December 1975, President Ford travelled to Hawaii to issue a Pacific Doctrine, the gist of which was to assert that "[D]espite the tragedies of Vietnam, ... the United States remained a Pacific power."<sup>35</sup> To justify his declaration, "Ford focused on the growing 'commercial involvement' in Asia," and acknowledged that "U.S. economic interests in Asia were becoming larger than those in Europe."<sup>36</sup> Yet he also acknowledged that with Asia's rise on America's interest horizon was a concomitant overall decline in U.S. power; a decline which would required its allies to increase their contributions to the Asia-Pacific security partnership. Of course, it was intended that Japan, whose role will be discussed in Chapter III, would continue to be a key element of that partnership.<sup>37</sup> During this period of American "reevaluation" regarding its goals and interests in the Asia-Pacific region, the results of a series of political-

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<sup>35</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 636.

<sup>36</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 636.

<sup>37</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 55.

military initiatives undertaken by the U.S. and other various actors in Southeast Asia were beginning to impact that region's security picture.

#### **4. Redefining U.S. Security Interests in Southeast Asia**

The "opening" of China in 1972 by President Nixon was the first among several moves made by some of the key actors in the Asia-Pacific region over the next eight to ten years which realigned the existing power relationships in the area, alternatively decreasing and then increasing the threat perception in ASEAN. The U.S. rapprochement with China was viewed with some favor among ASEAN leaders as, somewhat akin to the symmetry between the U.S. and Japan, it was felt that given Washington's position in Southeast Asia, the prospects for PRC intrusion would lessen. In fact, a concomitant development in this period of rapprochement was a move to resolve the "overseas Chinese" issue between China and ASEAN as well as a reduction in China's support for indigenous communist parties.<sup>38</sup> Also, "by the mid-1970s, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia had entered into formal diplomatic relations with Beijing."<sup>39</sup> To be sure, problems persisted and the fears among Southeast Asians of latent

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<sup>38</sup>Takashi Tajima, China and South-east Asia: Strategic Interests and Policy Prospects, Adelphi Paper #172, (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983): 16-28.

<sup>39</sup>A. James Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1989), 71.



Chinese hegemonistic goals in the region remain real today. Several factors account for the change in Chinese policy toward the region. A hostile Vietnam, the ever-dangerous Soviet Union, and her own obviously weakened state following the ravages of the Cultural Revolution may help to explain the willingness of China to encourage the rapprochement with the U.S., as well as the desire to limit the scope of her external obligations and causes. Unwittingly then, the changing power relationships in Indochina and East Asia had the effect of moderating ASEAN's threat perceptions.

In 1978, however, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia began a new series of moves by the Asia-Pacific "powers" which served to heighten the threat potential to ASEAN emanating from the mainland. The events which followed over the next two years--China's brief incursion into Vietnam in February 1979, the subsequent stationing of a growing number of Soviet naval and air forces at Cam Ranh Bay and Danang, and finally, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979--refocused U.S. attention on the vulnerability of the ASEAN states and the Southeast Asian region in general. As Sheldon Simon notes, "By the early 1980s, then, stability in Southeast Asia was once again seen as an important condition in Washington, not because of an ideological battle against world communism as in the 1960s but because of growing Soviet capabilities to disrupt international commerce and energy

supplies which transit through the region."<sup>40</sup> The effects were almost instantaneous. U.S. base negotiations with the Philippines were rapidly concluded, after nearly two years of wrangling, and at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bali in July 1979, Secretary of State Vance reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the region's security.<sup>41</sup> Again though, U.S. strategists faced a dilemma with regard to the formulation of a "deterrent" strategy in the region--could the United States attain a credible deterrent posture without itself becoming the bulk of the deterrent?

Several options for the coming decade were available to the United States in responding to the challenge to its Asian interests--including the security and economic viability of ASEAN. First, "[T]he idea of a Sino-American alliance was in fashion during the Carter years and in the early years of the Reagan administration."<sup>42</sup> However, there were numerous arguments against such an alliance and "[E]ventually, China's own cool reception to the idea of a strategic alliance, and its moves toward reconciliation with the Soviet Union in 1982,

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<sup>40</sup>Sheldon W. Simon, "Explaining American Security Interests in Southeast Asia," in International Security in the Southeast Asia and Southwest Pacific Region, ed. T.B. Millar, (St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1983), 19.

<sup>41</sup>Simon, "Explaining American Security Interests," 29.

<sup>42</sup>Dreyer, Asian-Pacific Regional Security, 5.

spelled the demise of this concept."<sup>43</sup> Second, "[A] Sino-Japanese alliance struck some American policy makers as desirable since it meant the Asianization of the defense of Asia and the Pacific."<sup>44</sup> This proposal contained notable deficiencies, particularly its assumption of complimentary economies, goals, interests, and threat perceptions between the two nations. Perhaps even more problematic would have been selling this idea to ASEAN. The third option explored involved forging an alliance between the non-communist states in the region.<sup>45</sup> Several factors served to undermine this possibility as well, including, the lack of consensus among the non-communist states as to the major threat, the possibility that an anti-communist alliance would serve to drive the communist states closer together, and the unfavorable impact such an alliance would necessarily have on the emerging U.S.-China relationship.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, the United States fell back on its traditional reliance on the bilateral and multilateral defense agreements it had with

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<sup>43</sup>Dreyer, Asian-Pacific Regional Security, 5-6.

<sup>44</sup>Dreyer, Asian-Pacific Regional Security, 6.

<sup>45</sup>Dreyer, Asian-Pacific Regional Security, 7.

<sup>46</sup>Dreyer, Asian-Pacific Regional Security, 7-8.

various nations in the region<sup>47</sup> and sought to use these relationships and its own position as the common link between them to maintain a balance of power in the region.

In Southeast Asia, the manifestation of this balance was, on the one hand, a United States-ASEAN-Japan-China "partnership"; and, on the other hand, a Soviet-Vietnamese alliance.<sup>48</sup> As a result of the varying political, military, and economic capabilities of the "partnership," including self-imposed limitations, roles were defined early on. That the United States assumed more of the military burden was logical because in Washington's eyes, the events in Southeast Asia were an extension of the global rivalry with the Soviet Union--a rivalry that had been stirred from relative dormancy in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan. For ASEAN, whose focus was directed more to the regional concern of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, their position as militarily weak developing economies necessitated they take a more political and diplomatic role in resolving the crisis in

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<sup>47</sup>These relationships included formal pacts with Japan, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and, Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, the "China Card" was considered a valuable asset in establishing the framework of an anti-Soviet-Vietnam coalition. China continued to be an effective "deterrent" against the threat of a full-scale Vietnamese incursion into Thailand throughout the 1980's.

<sup>48</sup>K.S. Nathan, "U.S.-Soviet Relations in Asia: Their Impact upon ASEAN and Japan," in Trilateralism in Asia: Problems and Prospects in U.S.-Japan-ASEAN Relations, eds. K.S. Nathan and M. Pathmanathan, (Kuala Lumpur: Antara Book Company, 1986), 56.

Indochina. The role Japan would come to play in this partnership was "defined" in the Carter-Ohira Joint Declaration of 1979. It called for Japan to "increase its contribution to the security of the region by playing the 'non-military' role of cooperating with Asian-Pacific nations in economic development and educational, scientific, and technological exchange."<sup>49</sup> This sentiment was consistently reinforced by ASEAN leadership throughout the 1980's.<sup>50</sup> China's participation in the "partnership," while not universally appreciated, was nonetheless accepted because of her Kautilian relationship with Thailand, ASEAN's "front-line" state after Vietnam invaded Cambodia.

For the United States, the geographic scope of the Soviet threat to its interests in Southeast Asia was expanded dramatically in the years following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. The physical presence of growing Soviet forces at Cam Ranh Bay and Danang, the burgeoning strength of the Soviet Pacific fleet, and the invasion of Afghanistan all served to illustrate to U.S. strategists that the Soviet ability to blockade or interdict vital shipping routes in and around Southeast Asia was a real and present danger. As Gregor

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<sup>49</sup>Hiroko Yamane, "Japan as an Asian/Pacific Power," Asian Survey 27, no. 12 (December 1987): 1307.

<sup>50</sup>Michael Richardson, "No Role for Japanese Military," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter 17, no. 1 (July 1990): 11.

explained, "any nation in the West Pacific that depends on sea traffic to sustain its economies and defense forces would have to be gravely concerned by evidence that the Soviet Union could interdict critical sea-lanes in terms[times] of crisis or conflict."<sup>51</sup> The United States viewed the intrusion of Soviet forces into the South China Sea, coupled with advances in Southwest and Northeast Asia, as indicative of a global realignment of the correlation of forces, in part due to the military malaise in the U.S., characterized by low morale, high drug use, and a significantly denuded force structure, that followed the end of the Vietnam war--the manifestation of which was, for naval forces, the adoption of the "Swing" strategy.<sup>52</sup>

#### **5. Active "Defense": The Maritime Strategy**

The Maritime Strategy was the U.S. Navy's response to the increasingly untenable shift in the correlation of forces. Codified by President Reagan in December 1982, the essential requirement of the Maritime Strategy was to attain "Maritime

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<sup>51</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 50.

<sup>52</sup>The "Swing" strategy called for shifting Pacific fleet units to the Atlantic fleet in the event of a conflict in Europe to effect the reinforcement/resupply of NATO forces. The adoption of this strategy was forced by the dramatic reduction of naval forces which occurred after the Vietnam war. The "Swing" strategy was an admission that the U.S. could no longer fight a "two-ocean" war.

Superiority" over our Soviet nemesis.<sup>53</sup> The result was a renunciation of the "Swing" strategy and a massive build-up of the U.S. Navy with heavy emphasis placed on aircraft carriers and sea control forces.<sup>54</sup> The expansion of military capability was not limited to U.S. forces. In Japan, Prime Minister Nakasone shared President Reagan's concern regarding the menacing presence of Soviet forces operating in the Sea of Japan as well as the Sea of Okhotsk and correspondingly sought to increase the capability of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, particularly in anti-submarine warfare. Defense budgets in the ASEAN states expanded as well, with an increasingly sophisticated inventory of weapons being procured from the United States and other Western powers. That the U.S. Maritime Strategy had a "spill over" effect on the militaries of its Asian allies and trade partners was intentional. The Strategy required U.S. forces to operate far forward and "take the fight to the enemy." America's allies were expected to be partners in this strategy; their roles being to provide base facilities for U.S. air and naval forces, and "direct cooperation through the utilization of their own air and naval assets to monitor regions adjacent to their territories and, if need be, escort and fight alongside

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<sup>53</sup>G. Jacobs, "US Seapower in the Western Pacific," Asian Defence Journal (March 1990): 54.

<sup>54</sup>Jacobs, "US Seapower in the Western Pacific," 54.

U.S. forces."<sup>55</sup> In practice, however, the Strategy was essentially unilateralist. Increasingly it became a point of great contention between the United States and its allies as the 1980's wore on especially in light of both Gorbachev's new initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region and Washington's more urgent calls for "equitable" burden sharing in view of America's growing trade imbalance with the region.

#### **6. ASEAN and The Maritime Strategy**

There are several reasons why the U.S. Maritime Strategy failed to engender a more enthusiastic "direct support" response from ASEAN. Most importantly,

open collaboration would violate ASEAN's primary foreign policy goal: the creation of ZOPFAN. The zone concept serves several political purposes: (1) it sustains ASEAN's credibility within the Nonaligned Movement despite the fact that most of its members have ties to Western powers; (2) it posits a long-term goal for Southeast Asia free of all great power encroachments, including those by the United States, Soviet Union, and, potentially China; (3) it provides a politically acceptable way of satisfying Indonesia's desire to be the security policy leader of ASEAN without requiring other Western-aligned members to sacrifice their security links to outsiders.<sup>56</sup>

A second reason is that

ASEAN states ... are less concerned about the Soviet presence in Southeast Asia than is the

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<sup>55</sup>Sheldon W. Simon, "Pacific Rim Reactions to U.S. Military Strategy," in Security, Strategy, and Policy Responses in the Pacific Rim, eds. Young Whan Kihl and Lawrence E. Grinter, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 81.

<sup>56</sup>Simon, "Pacific Rim Reactions," 92.



United States. They foresee no direct threat to themselves from the USSR. Rather, the Soviet presence is seen as: (1) part of the global superpower confrontation; (2) the exertion of its role as an Asian power; (3) necessary both to support and exert leverage on Vietnam; (4) an effort to surround China; and (5) the deployment of sufficient capability to protect its own SLOCs to and from Vladivostok.<sup>57</sup>

Lastly, if war erupted with the Soviet Union, ASEAN believed that U.S. naval forces, particularly carrier battle groups, would have to devote a significant portion of their assets to self-defense, "with little to spare to support friendly armies on land."<sup>58</sup> The fact that the primary security concern of ASEAN during this period was the threat of Vietnamese adventurism, particularly into Thailand, served to underscore the differences in threat perceptions between the U.S. and its Southeast Asian "partners." These differences help to explain why the concept of burden sharing, given this basic asymmetry, has been difficult for the U.S. to sell in the region.

The decline of the Soviet "threat" in Southeast Asia in recent years has laid the concept of a forward-oriented maritime strategy for the region's defense open to question in U.S. policy circles: the implication is that U.S. security interests in the region have been largely derivative of its

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<sup>57</sup>Simon, "Pacific Rim Reactions," 93.

<sup>58</sup>Richard K. Betts, "The United States: Global Deterrence," in Security Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region, ed. James W. Morley, (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1986), 45.

greater, global concerns over Soviet intentions.<sup>59</sup> Yet, the United States has significant economic and political interests in Southeast Asia which merit inclusion into a post-Cold War security framework. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Richard Solomon, stated that "ASEAN's vitality has now made it one of the pillars of U.S. relations with the Pacific; and we view the association as an essential ingredient in any entity of regional economic cooperation."<sup>60</sup> As well, there is considerable popular sentiment in ASEAN which favors the continuation of a U.S. presence in the region.<sup>61</sup> However, economic considerations, both in terms of the current account imbalance and pressures for budget reductions, will necessarily limit the options available to the United States as it attempts to articulate a new strategy for the pursuit and protection of its interests in Southeast Asia. While future United States policy must serve the national interest, it must also be mindful of the repercussions it will have in the region. American attention

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<sup>59</sup>Betts, "The United States: Global Deterrence," 46.

<sup>60</sup>Department of State, "The Promise of Pacific Economic Cooperation," by Richard Solomon. Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 21 September 1989. Department of State Bulletin (December 1989), 35.

<sup>61</sup>Michael Richardson, "Plans for a post-Cold War peace," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter 17, no. 5 (November 1990): 32.

is particularly warranted since the U.S. has actively encouraged Japan's participation in the structure of the region's security framework.

### **III. DEALING WITH JAPAN: THE PRICE PAID FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The promise of multipolarity in the post-Cold War world may be viewed as welcome news not only to the United States and the Soviet Union, but also to the nations whose political, economic, and military achievements have been to some degree or another stifled by the overriding exigencies of the Superpower confrontation. New horizons for national self-expression have been opened. No longer are the "client" states of the Superpowers constrained by zero-sum political considerations based on the East-West struggle.

In the Western camp, South Korea, Japan, and the NATO allies can all be expected to pursue far more "independent" foreign policy initiatives. India may become more emboldened as she seeks to legitimize her claim to predominance over the Indian Ocean littoral. China is also likely to seek a greater role in both international fora as well as the Asia-Pacific region. While these changes are enthusiastically received in some quarters, in ASEAN they create apprehension and concern about the potential for newly ambitious regional hegemons, particularly those that might follow in the wake of any precipitous drawdown of U.S. forces. In this regard, ASEAN harbors special fears over Japanese intentions.

These fears appear to be grounded in two primary considerations: 1) Japan's extensive economic penetration into ASEAN economies gives it considerable leverage in the region; and 2) The U.S. influence on Japanese security policy will inevitably weaken in the post-Cold War realignment of international power. As Michael Vatikiotis explains, "If,... Japan is likely to move steadily away from its preoccupation with the US-Soviet relationship, Asean's strategic concerns on Japan's future role focus on where Tokyo's security policy will be re-directed."<sup>62</sup> Indeed, in a speech made during a recent tour of ASEAN, Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu's announcement "that Japan will assume a greater political role in Asia has underlined Tokyo's emerging power status."<sup>63</sup> For its part, ASEAN may be willing to accept a greater role for Japan, but only if it remains strongly allied with the United States. According to Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, "A Japan that remains firmly anchored to the US alliance system and which is trusted by its neighbours will be a positive force ..."<sup>64</sup> A closer examination of the Japan-ASEAN relationship in the U.S.-Japan-ASEAN security framework may

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<sup>62</sup>Michael Vatikiotis, "Yankee please stay," Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 December 1990, 30.

<sup>63</sup>Michael Vatikiotis, "The gentle giant," Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 May 1991, 11.

<sup>64</sup>Vatikiotis, "The gentle giant," 12.

help to explain why, from the ASEAN perspective, the acceptance of the Japanese component must be predicated on a viable U.S. presence in the region.

Any discussion of ASEAN's modern relationship with Japan must, of necessity, have the pre-World War II period of liberation/occupation as a reference point from which to examine post-war policies. In the pre-war years, the Japanese were seen as liberators by many of the nations in Southeast Asia whose history had been marked by European colonialism. Japan spread through the region gaining popular support for its goal of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere with ethnocentric, anti-colonial slogans like "Asia for Asians." Japanese influence permeated the region rapidly under the guise of liberator but the enthusiasm for their message rapidly vanished as the brutality of military occupation came to be felt with increasing severity. While true liberation and independence did not necessarily follow the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War, they would soon be forthcoming.

The burden of the unpleasant memories and suspicions of Japan's intentions caused by that period of militaristic economic hegemonism has been carried like unwanted baggage by Japanese leaders since Prime Minister Yoshida. Japan's past has had a significant influence on ASEAN fears regarding the implications for Southeast Asia of Japan's current pervasive influence on national economies. Indeed, today those fears

have been heightened in some circles largely because the post-war Japanese economic "intrusion" into ASEAN has been predicated on a perceived symmetry between the United States and Japan. In other words, Japan's penetration into the ASEAN economy has been more acceptable as long as it was accompanied by a strong U.S. military presence in the region to act as a counterbalance--precluding the possibility of a military role by Japan. It is felt that the impending decline of the U.S. military presence may open the door for deeper Japanese involvement in the region; an untenable situation from the ASEAN point of view.<sup>65</sup> How has this tripartite relationship developed?

In the post-World War II history of Japan's relations with Southeast Asia, there have been three distinct phases:

The first phase could be called the period of reparations (1952-1964), characterized by the pursuit of economic diplomacy through the payment of reparations. The second phase, the period of regional development (1965-1975), was brought about largely by changing American policy toward Southeast Asia and was characterized by Japan's active participation in regional economic development--e.g., the establishment of the Asian Development Bank, The Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia, and the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC). In a sense, during the first two periods, the most important variable in explaining Japan's policy toward Southeast Asia was the American presence in the region, on which hinged Prime Minister Yoshida's Asian Marshall Plan, Prime Minister Kishi's Southeast Asian Development Fund, and Prime

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<sup>65</sup>Richardson, "No Role for the Japanese Military," 11.

Minister Sato's strong endorsement of regional development. The third phase, the so-called Fukuda Doctrine period, began with the declaration by Prime Minister Fukuda in August 1977 of Japan's positive politico-economic role in Southeast Asia.<sup>66</sup>

Of course, altruism was not the primary motivation in developing Japan's Southeast Asia policies. The number one concern of post-war Japan was to rebuild her economic capacity which relied on imported raw materials and export markets for finished products. Toward that end, the post-war environment in the Asia-Pacific region, defined as it was by the U.S. preoccupation with "containing" communism, allowed the Japanese to do peacefully what they could not do militarily-- establish a regional economic infrastructure suited to their own development needs. Indeed, during the period of reparations, the manner in which reparations were made served to enhance Japan's position in Southeast Asian markets which has served her long-term economic growth requirements.<sup>67</sup> Actually, there existed, and to some extent still does exist, a feeling that the economic relationship between Japan and Southeast Asia was, and is, mutually beneficial. The newly emerging independent economies of Southeast Asia were in need of development funds and Japan had funds which she wanted to

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<sup>66</sup>Sueo Sudo, "Japan-ASEAN Relations: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy," Asian Survey 28, no. 5 (May 1988): 509.

<sup>67</sup>Bilveer Singh, "Japan and Southeast Asia," Asian Defence Journal (June 1989): 69.



use for resource exploitation and market development. Japan's relation with Southeast Asia was best seen as a symbiotic relationship. During the second phase, Japan's influence became more pervasive and the reaction in Southeast Asia became more alarmist; however, the U.S. presence in the region served to moderate fears of renewed Japanese hegemonism. Among the region's ruling elites, the perception of a symmetry in the U.S.-Japan relationship in Southeast Asia had developed.

The formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations gave the region a sense of unity which Japan applauded "as an affirmation of growing Southeast Asian regionalism, thus giving tacit encouragement to Tokyo's regional development strategy."<sup>68</sup> However, Japan's on-going and rapid economic penetration of the area elicited a series of "collective" actions from ASEAN including "Thailand's Japanese goods boycott movement in 1972 and Malaysia's criticism of Japanese production and export of synthetic rubber."<sup>69</sup> Coincident with this was the winding down of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict and, as per the Nixon Doctrine, the transfer of "self-defense" responsibilities to indigenous forces. As a result of the new role the U.S. was

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<sup>68</sup>Sudo, "Japan-ASEAN Relations," 510.

<sup>69</sup>Sudo, "Japan-ASEAN Relations," 511.

ostensibly seeking for itself in the framework of Southeast Asian regional security, the Japanese position began to look increasingly strong. The perception of a developing asymmetry in the U.S.-Japan relationship in Southeast Asia once again caused ASEAN leaders to cast suspicion on Japanese goals and intentions in the region. The deterioration of Japan's relations with ASEAN reached a head with Prime Minister Tanaka's visit in 1974 which saw widespread anti-Japanese demonstrations throughout the region.<sup>70</sup>

Clearly, the impending military decline of the U.S. presence in the region, which had been so beneficial to Japan in allaying the fears of her trade partners that she might again one day seek to "dominate" the region, coupled with Japan's increasing reliance on the markets and resources of ASEAN, served to compel Japanese leadership to formulate a new approach to regional interaction. The underlying themes of the new approach were to be "openness" and "forthrightness"; the goal being to achieve a mutual understanding of each party's needs and concerns.

The Fukuda Doctrine, which has been the foundation of Japan's present relationship with ASEAN, enunciated three primary principles:

1. Japan rejects the role of a military power and seeks the peace and prosperity of Southeast Asia.

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<sup>70</sup>Sudo, "Japan-ASEAN Relations," 511.

2. Japan wants a relationship of mutual confidence and trust based on heart to heart understanding.
3. Japan is an equal partner of ASEAN countries and will cooperate positively in their own efforts, while aiming at a relationship of mutual understanding with Indochina.<sup>71</sup>

The first act of good faith in the third phase of relations was a one billion dollar pledge of aid for ASEAN industrial development; a prime example of Tokyo's "dollar diplomacy."

Further Japanese economic influence in Southeast Asia was gained under the Carter-Ohira Joint Declaration of 1979. This declaration called for Japan to "increase its contribution to the security of the region by playing the 'non-military' role of cooperating with Asian-Pacific nations in economic development and educational, scientific, and technological exchange. This economic-based approach to the well-being of the Asian-Pacific region, termed 'comprehensive security,' was what allowed Japan to make its presence increasingly accepted in the region without becoming involved in military or political issues."<sup>72</sup> It seems then, that as with the first two periods of Japanese-Southeast Asian relations, the third phase also saw the Japanese make significant, decisive, economic inroads into the region primarily because the United States was willing to shoulder the burden of military defense

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<sup>71</sup>Singh, "Japan and Southeast Asia," 70.

<sup>72</sup>Yamane, "Japan as an Asia/Pacific Power," 1306.

in the area. Of course, the extent and depth of economic penetration would only be heightened during the 1980's, as Japan began to have a tremendous trade surplus with the United States which allowed for even greater direct investment and Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursements throughout the region.

Today, the geo-political landscape is changing as a result of the dramatic events of the last two years. The political-economic-military status quo which governed the trilateral relationship between ASEAN, the United States, and Japan is "under strain" due to the weight of demands for change--particularly from the U.S.--caused by reduced superpower tensions and domestic economic problems. What will be the effect of these changes in ASEAN? How will issues of security and stability be addressed? How will the threat horizons of the ASEAN states change as new roles are thrust upon the militaries of the memberstates?

#### IV. "THREATS" TO ASEAN SECURITY

A discussion of the nature of the threat to ASEAN in the wake of the events of the last two years is necessarily a subjective analysis of those issues which have already become of concern to the Association's leadership. This is simply because the results of the global "shake-up" have not yet been fully realized--particularly with respect to how they will affect U.S. policy in the region. Indeed, the moves made by the United States in response to its own economic problems and the changing superpower relationship will have the most impact on the future security of the ASEAN states. Uncertainty may well be the most immediate concern to ASEAN leaders; principally because the post-Cold War role that the U.S. seeks for itself in the region will have a significant impact on the calculations being made by other nations who may seek an expanded regional role.<sup>73</sup> However, a deeper examination of the variety and complexity of the threat scenarios facing the ASEAN states is warranted in order to fully understand the significance of the U.S. role in the framework of Southeast Asian security.

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<sup>73</sup>China, India, Japan, and Indonesia are all potential seekers of regional hegemony.

## **A. INSURGENT GROUPS/RELIGIOUS SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS**

Although insurgent groups are active in all of the ASEAN states except Singapore, the only group that currently presents a real threat to the government is the New People's Army (NPA) in the Philippines.<sup>74</sup> The threat presented by the NPA is especially grave since the "Armed Forces of the Philippine[s] (AFP) is neither united nor firmly under civilian control."<sup>75</sup> Clearly, the prospect of a pullout of U.S. forces from Subic Naval Station and Clark Air Force Base compounds the problems of internal stability for the Aquino government. Yet, she is in a Catch-22 because in order to satisfy the demands of her rivals, she must press for a U.S. withdrawal or a Treaty agreement on future U.S. use of the bases, the demands of which, from all reports, would be untenable to the U.S. government.

Religious and national separatist movements are active in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region could invite extraregional supporters of these groups to step-up aid efforts which might require the ASEAN governments to devote increasing resources to national defense forces which might, in turn, hamper

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<sup>74</sup>Mark Turner, "The Philippines: disillusioned and disunited," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter 17, no. 1 (July 1990): 11-12.

<sup>75</sup>Turner, "The Philippines," 11.

economic growth.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, as we will see in Chapter Five, the ASEAN states are devoting an increasing percentage of their GDP towards the acquisition of sophisticated Western military hardware in order to extend their own defense perimeters in the hopes of deterring foreign adventurism into their internal affairs. The effects of this general force modernization have not been without impact within the Association--a testimony to the problems of "unilateralism existing in a multilateral framework."<sup>77</sup> In fact, a regional arms race of sorts has developed which has exacerbated existing intraregional tensions among the members.<sup>78</sup>

#### B. INTRA-ASEAN CONCERNS

ASEAN is not a homogeneous organization. Southeast Asia is a region which has been riven by territorial disputes such as those involving the Spratly Islands, and by border skirmishes, such as those which have occurred between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, and between the Philippines and Malaysia, as well as many others. Indeed, as Wong Kan Seng, Singapore's Foreign Minister has pointed out, "[T]he prime reason for conflict in Southeast Asia was never

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<sup>76</sup>See note 16.

<sup>77</sup>Zara Dian, "The Return to ASEAN Solidarity," Asian Defence Journal (August 1989): 3.

<sup>78</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-033, "Article Analyzes Military's Political Role," 16 February 1990, 80.

superpower intervention but local rivalries that had their root causes in historical animosities, racial and religious divisions or competition for influence and resources."<sup>79</sup> This may partly help to explain why military cooperation within ASEAN has never gone beyond bilateral relations--accounting for the willingness of the ASEAN states to allow the U.S. to provide "blanket" security for the region.<sup>80</sup> With the impending decline of the U.S. military presence in the region, a factor which has arguably had some moderating effect on intraregional tensions, the inclination to "paper over" disputes may wane as group interests are overcome by national self-interest. Will a void be created by a U.S. withdrawal, to be filled by a regional or possibly an extraregional hegemon?

### C. EXTRA-ASSOCIATION CONCERNS

Of course, the most publicized threat to ASEAN security has been that emanating from the Indochinese states, specifically Vietnam. The 11 year occupation of Cambodia by Vietnamese forces was a test of ASEAN unity in the face of a commonly feared enemy; a test which they passed quite admirably. However, the events of the last two years,

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<sup>79</sup>Michael Richardson, "Breaking down the Asian barriers," Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter 17, no. 3 (September 1990): 24.

<sup>80</sup>Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," Asian Defence Journal (July 1989): 28.



Gorbachev cutting aid to Vietnam, and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, have served to dramatically reduce the threat potential from Indochina.<sup>81</sup> How will these events affect the future of ASEAN unity on security issues? Zakaria Ahmad claims that politically, "the main raison d'etre of that unison (fear of Vietnamese aggression) may no longer be perceived as a tenable argument in the light of recent international and regional developments in which the prospects for conflict and conflagration are dim."<sup>82</sup> As well, China has long figured prominently in the threat calculations of the ASEAN states. Beijing's policies toward ASEAN have generally been formulated with her own security interests in mind; e.g., during the crisis in Indochina she found it useful to "ally" herself with Thailand and foster good political relations with the other memberstates as a hedge against Vietnamese expansion.<sup>83</sup> In the future, "[T]he role that communist China can and will play in the region will be significantly influenced by international considerations, the changing military balance, and current and anticipated economic interests and concerns, as well as the internal political,

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<sup>81</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-055, "Perception of Threat from North said 'Outdated'," 21 March 1990, 30.

<sup>82</sup>Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "The Impending Challenge to ASEAN Regional Cooperation," Asian Defence Journal (December 1989): 5.

<sup>83</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 70-75.

social, and economic circumstances in Southeast Asia."<sup>84</sup> Ultimately, the prospects for extraregional military or "ideological" intrusion into the region will hinge on whether or not the U.S. retains a permanent presence in Southeast Asia.<sup>85</sup>

However, it is most likely that the "threat" to ASEAN will be more strongly felt in the economic-environmental realm, and will be centered on the Japan-ASEAN relationship. The depth of penetration of Japan into the economies of Southeast Asia has been insidious, and raises some serious concerns regarding the future of economic sovereignty in the region. Some of the concerns voiced over their methods of economic interaction indicate that: the region has become too dependent upon Japanese financial assistance; Japanese industry-led development is too self-centered and lacks a sense of regional responsibility; and, a vertical hierarchy is being established in which economic relations are becoming increasingly dominated by and beneficial for Japan. Bruce Koppel and Michael Plummer list several reasons why these concerns are likely to continue and perhaps become more divisive. First, "Japan is the largest bilateral aid donor in every Asian country except Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, Malaysia, and

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<sup>84</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 75.

<sup>85</sup>Richardson, "No Role for Japanese Military," 11.

Pakistan." Second, "there is now a pattern of large and still growing annual ODA commitments from Japan.... in most cases the largest portion of the commitments will have two characteristics: (1) the aid flows are loans channeled through the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), and (2) to one degree or another the loans are tied; they must be used to purchase goods and services of Japanese origin."<sup>86</sup> Here again, U.S.-Japanese cooperation in the region is a critical precondition for continued stability. "Without it, the Pacific might be split into two opposing economic blocks," according to then Singaporean Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, "'A de facto emergence of such blocks will mean a world fraught with conflicts....'"<sup>87</sup> To be sure, there are those in ASEAN who have a more favorable opinion of the relationship, or perhaps see it as a necessary evil that they must accept in order to pave the way for their own economic growth. The best illustration of Japan's precarious balance between economic hegemonist and indispensable benefactor is in the case of Japanese-Thai relations. While there are some truly unique aspects of this relationship, nevertheless the process and methods of economic intrusion by the Japanese into Thailand

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<sup>86</sup>Bruce Koppel and Michael Plummer, "Japan's Ascendancy as a Foreign-Aid Power," Asian Survey 29, no. 11 (November 1989): 1048-1049.

<sup>87</sup>"If the eagle takes flight," The Economist, 4 August 1990, 25.

may be similar enough to the rest of ASEAN so as to warrant a generalization.

In Thailand, the Japanese policy of using ODA to create a favorable infrastructural environment as a precursor to direct foreign investment and commercial loans has proven successful. "Japanese Ambassador to Bangkok, Hisahiko Okazaki estimates that in the next three years, 300 Japanese factories will be built in Thailand, partly on the back of a massive infusion of official aid from Japan geared to long-term investment projects."<sup>88</sup> Thai officials publicly laud Japan's investment policies because Japanese aid has made Thailand habitable for other investors and has helped fuel Thailand's export-based economy. However, complaints abound. Many echo Hiroko Yamane in saying that the Japanese are exploiting the currently favorable conditions for industrial development without a sense of regional responsibility. This is a problem that most nations, who are able to extend their influence either by military or economic means, fall into--the desire to transfer one's goals and values to "clients" simply because one has the "power" to do so; many time without due regard for the social, religious, or ethnic considerations of the beneficiary state.

Critics of Thailand's relationship with Japan charge that the government has mortgaged Thailand's future by relying too

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<sup>88</sup>Rodney Tasker, "Wedded to Success," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 May 1990, 49.

heavily on Japanese investment. There is concern that the Thai economy has already become too dependent upon Japanese investment, so much so that the Japanese may be in a position to use their clout for political purposes.<sup>89</sup> In fact, some in the government have already resigned themselves to a future of dependence upon Japan. Recently, a Thai Foreign Ministry official said, "Economically, we are dependent upon Japan. We have to admit that.... It would be next to impossible to restructure our economic relationship."<sup>90</sup> This feeling is pervasive in ASEAN and the impact is not lost on the Japanese. If the military "commitment" of the United States to ASEAN is scaled-back sharply, a power vacuum of sorts would be created. This would inevitably affect the existing balance in the trilateral U.S.-Japan-ASEAN relationship, particularly as viewed from the Association. The 1990's, then, could well be a test of Japan's ability to promote continued peace and prosperity in ASEAN through her particular brand of "dollar diplomacy" without appearing to become too obtrusive. As post-Cold War considerations have and will continue to impact the national security decision-making process in the United States and Japan, so too have they impacted the ASEAN states.

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<sup>89</sup>Tasker, "Wedded to Success," 50.

<sup>90</sup>Paul Handley, "Unequal Partners," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 May 1990, 51.

It seems that strategic planners and defense policy-makers in ASEAN are willing to accept the demands that will be placed on them as more of the burden of ensuring their own security falls to them. Thus, they are accordingly building-up their own indigenous defense capabilities. These two acts--the reduction of a U.S. military presence concomitant with a growth in local armed forces--might clear the way for latent intraregional tensions to come to a boil. As well, a power vacuum created by a rapid withdrawal or restructuring of the U.S. military commitment to the region might invite unwanted extraregional powers seeking to extend the range of their armed forces.<sup>91</sup>

These are some of the considerations which must be taken into account as the future of ASEAN security and stability is discussed. The gist of the problem is evident: in the post-Cold War world, the potential threats to regional security are many and varied, most of which are beyond the power of the collective Association to control. Indeed, as economic and political development proceed in these states, it is questionable whether ASEAN itself will survive the resurgence of national self-interest among its members.

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<sup>91</sup>Richardson, "No Role for Japanese Military," 11.

**V. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN ASEAN STATES:  
PROSPECTS FOR A COLLECTIVE SECURITY REGIME**

The states that comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations share many similar characteristics and concerns, yet it is their differences which will more than likely prevent ASEAN from becoming a cohesive security alliance. Those who would argue against such a supposition might point to ASEAN's 23 year history and its progressive unity on many economic issues. Others might claim that the Association demonstrated remarkable solidarity as it sought to resolve the Cambodian crisis. Of course, still others might recall that a number of bilateral, trilateral, and even extraregional security "relationships" already exist among these nations.

All of these are valid arguments which on the surface would seem more than adequate to effectively rebut any assertion that the factors against the formation of a wholly ASEAN-centered security alliance outweigh those factors for such a coalition. However, these positive arguments misrepresent ASEAN as an entity of singular purpose and interest. As previous chapters have indicated, there are many divisive issues facing the Association members which challenge its unity such as; uneven economic development, varying threat perceptions, territorial disputes, and internal instability.

A brief examination of some of the characteristics which have influenced the cultural, political, economic, and sociological development of the ASEAN states may help to show that generally, they are more unique than similar. Geographic setting, whether island or mainland, has been a significant factor in developing these nations' outward orientations. Cultural heritage, whether Sinic, Indic, Arabic, or even Western, has influenced religious affiliations, ethnic makeup and, in some of the ASEAN states, concerns among the ruling elites over the ability of the "mother country" to exercise excessive penetration into internal affairs. The varied colonial histories of the ASEAN states, which have included British, French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and American control, not to mention the Japanese before, during, and since World War II, have influenced indigenous political systems, bureaucratic structure, and economic philosophy, as well as military organization. While these are only a few examples of how the memberstates of ASEAN have been, in a sense, molded and made unique by their surroundings and their histories, they are sufficient to illustrate the complexities within the Association that make consensus-building so problematic.

Of course, consensus in ASEAN has been easier to achieve in the face of a threat which is perceived to be "equally" menacing to the national interests of all; ergo, of "group" concern--for example the Vietnam-Cambodia issue. However,



what is important to remember about the ASEAN position on the Vietnam-Cambodia issue is that it was/is grounded in politics and diplomacy, not military force. That the tack taken by ASEAN in response to Vietnamese aggression was political and not military is due to two primary factors: 1) the underlying belief that the Vietnamese offensive would be restricted to Indochina; and, 2) the belief that even if Vietnam had the capability and decided to expand the scope of its invasion beyond Indochina, the United States and/or China would act as a buffer to prevent the hostile penetration of any of the ASEAN states.<sup>92</sup> Essentially, the price of ASEAN unity in this instance has been relatively cost-free to its membership. But what of the future of ASEAN unity? As Zakaria Ahmad has postulated, in lieu of the threat from Vietnam, is there really a unifying concern in ASEAN in terms of security considerations that is capable of overcoming and overriding the self-interests of the individual memberstates?<sup>93</sup>

Compounding the question of the future of ASEAN unity is the impending drawdown of the U.S. military presence in the

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<sup>92</sup>In the historical context of the Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia, the issue of whether or not an ASEAN military response would have been a viable policy alternative is moot. This is because presumably their decision to take a political, rather than military stand was based not as much on their inability to mount a military response as it was on their perception that it was not necessary, given the position of the United States in the region.

<sup>93</sup>Ahmad, "The Impending Challenge to ASEAN Regional Cooperation," 5.

region. The prospect of "going it alone" has led to changes in the military orientations of most of the ASEAN states. The ability to extend the scope of defense perimeters in support of national interests has come to assume greater importance. This development is significant in terms of ASEAN's capacity for military unity. As Zara Dian notes, "... in the security field, the outstanding issue remains that of unilateralism existing in a multilateral framework. ... in the future the system [ASEAN] is 'at risk' as there is no bind that superimposes a regional blotter on national aspirations."<sup>4</sup>

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the military in ASEAN, particularly its relationship to the ruling elites, its duties and responsibilities, current trends in arms procurement, and intraregional and extraregional associations. The following sections also examine the prospects for consensus on defense issues and seeks to determine if there exists in ASEAN the basis for a formal collective defense organization.

#### **A. INDEPENDENCE AND TURMOIL**

Independence in Southeast Asia did not follow a uniform timetable, and the processes through which it was achieved have had a significant influence on the nature of the civil-military relationship in each state. Thailand, the only ASEAN

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<sup>4</sup>Dian, "The Return to ASEAN Solidarity," 3.

state without a colonial heritage, gained re-independence immediately following Japan's defeat. The Philippines were "freed" from U.S. colonial administration on 4 July 1946. The Indonesians fought a drawn-out battle for independence against the Dutch which eventually ended in their favor in 1949. Malaysia finally became an independent member of the British Commonwealth only in 1957, and Singapore's independence would not come until its secession from the Malay Federation in 1965.<sup>95</sup> Zakaria Ahmad has characterized those first two decades of Southeast Asian history following the end of the war "as the dramatic transformation of colonial entities as independent states and the forging of 'new' national identities in a turbulent setting."<sup>96</sup>

The competition for power between rival factions early on made the consolidation of governmental authority and the establishment of political legitimacy highly problematic. Coups and coup attempts have been standard fare in Thailand and the present leadership in Indonesia is the result of an extremely bloody coup in 1965. Additionally, religious separatist groups have been in action throughout the post-war period in both Malaysia and the Philippines. Even today, every ASEAN state has active insurgency groups except

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<sup>95</sup>Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook, 440-933.

<sup>96</sup>Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Southeast Asia in the 1990s," Asian Defence Journal (July 1990): 6.

Singapore.<sup>97</sup> As well, extraregional actors--most notably China--have acted in concert with communist insurgent groups seeking to undermine the Western-oriented political systems in these states. Presently, communist parties are outlawed in all of the ASEAN states.<sup>98</sup>

The threat to internal security posed by the influence of extra-regional actors on the indigenous population has been a constant in the post-independence period. China has been, of course, the number one target of ASEAN recriminations regarding its efforts to meddle in the internal affairs of the Association's memberstates. In fact, a large part of this problem relates to the issue of the so-called "overseas Chinese"--those ethnic Chinese members of the respective ASEAN populations without whom the rapid pace of economic development in the last 25 years would have been difficult, yet who are often looked upon with suspicion and regarded as second-class citizens--with the exception of one Chinese-dominated city-state, Singapore.<sup>99</sup> Significantly, the issue of the "overseas Chinese" and China's support of revolutionary movements in ASEAN only abated with the advent of the U.S.-

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<sup>97</sup>Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook, 440-933.

<sup>98</sup>Lau Teik Soon, "Political and Security Trends in the ASEAN States," Asian Affairs 13, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 36.

<sup>99</sup>Tajima, China and South-east Asia, 16-26.

China rapprochement of the 1970's.<sup>100</sup> To be sure, problems have persisted and the fears among Southeast Asians of latent Chinese hegemonistic goals in the region remain very real today.

One of the results of the high level of internal political turmoil in the ASEAN states is that all of "the nations in the region share authoritarian,...political features."<sup>101</sup> Not surprisingly, the military has had a significant role in the internal security affairs of these states. As James Gregor has pointed out:

Within Southeast Asia the strains attendant on protracted war in Indochina and demanding economic development elsewhere have created destabilizing tensions. The dislocation of populations, the erosion of familiar traditional patterns of collective behavior, the precipitate rise in expectations, the increase in population density, and the maldistribution of welfare benefits have all contributed to regional instability and the real sense of protracted crisis. The result has been regular recourse to special powers by the noncommunist governments in the region.... Those countries that have not opted for a Marxist alternative have been compelled, by the very nature of the complex and protracted crisis in which they are involved, to employ authoritarian modalities to control ethnic tensions, developmental dislocations, political dissidence, and revolutionary initiatives.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Tajima, China and South-east Asia, 16-26.

<sup>101</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 6.

<sup>102</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 7.

That the ASEAN states have, for the most part, gratefully accepted the U.S. security umbrella as a guarantor of external defense is largely due to their deep and abiding preoccupation with internal security.

Gregor mentioned that the demands of economic development have contributed to the generally inward-orientation of the defense forces in ASEAN. Indeed, the concept of "defense for development" is a fairly standard theme in ASEAN government circles. Authoritarianism is warranted, so the theory goes, because developing economies require internal stability if they are to remain competitive. According to Tim Huxley, it is "clear that development is unlikely to proceed smoothly if a government lacks an effective military instrument with which to secure its domain against external and internal threats ... A country which is evidently unable to defend itself against aggression is unlikely to appeal to either foreign or local investors."<sup>103</sup> Echoing the "defense for development" theme, General Chawalit, then Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, noted that "building a stronger military force should go hand-in-hand with economic and investment development. Investment and other assets must be granted security and protection. This means that the Thai Armed forces must have the strength to protect the economy and

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<sup>103</sup>Tim Huxley, "Internal Security, Defence and Development in Southeast Asia," Arms Control 8, no. 2 (September 1987): 170.

industry."<sup>104</sup> It is clear, then, that the indigenous armed forces in ASEAN are expected to play a major role in establishing the conditions under which export-oriented economic development could flourish.

Of course, it is not unusual for the military to have a significant role in the political affairs of developing nations. This has certainly been the case in ASEAN, but again, to underscore the differences between these nations, the level of influence of and roles taken by the military in the respective memberstates has in the past and continues today to vary dramatically. According to Gregor, several factors have contributed to justify the high level of military participation and/or authoritarianism in the politics of the ASEAN states. These factors include: "retarded industrial development, high rates of population growth, ethnic tensions, domestic insurgencies, and international insecurity."<sup>105</sup> By extrapolation it can then be inferred that the functions of the military<sup>106</sup> would include: supporting economic/industrial development; ensuring popular compliance with national policies, including population guidelines; ameliorating ethnic

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<sup>104</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-088, "Magazine Reports Plans to Upgrade Armed Forces," 7 May 1990, 51-52.

<sup>105</sup>Gregor, In the Shadow of Giants, 6.

<sup>106</sup>For the purpose of this chapter, the rubric of military forces includes constabulary forces, paramilitary security forces, and national defense forces.

tensions; combating domestic insurgencies; and, protecting the state from the adverse effects of international insecurity. Of course, the ability or desire of the military to meet its assigned or chosen obligations depends heavily on a number of factors such as available resources and threat perceptions.

In the ASEAN states the duties and responsibilities of the military vary relative to each state's level of economic development and civil stability. It appears that those states with higher degrees of economic development have lower levels of civic unrest and therefore, their military orientation is moving outward, tending toward extended defense--for example, Singapore. In those states with lower economic development, we see higher levels of civic unrest and consequently a more inward-oriented defense stance--for example, the Philippines. These two examples are just the extremes on a continuum upon which we would find the other ASEAN states.

In addition to assigned duties and responsibilities, other factors such as the level and frequency of military interrelationships with other nations, existing defense dependencies, and patterns in arms production and procurement can be indicative of whether or not a state is pursuing either an internal or external defense posture. These "factors," duties and responsibilities, military interrelationships, and patterns of arms procurement, will be addressed separately, yet each is logically linked and, as a whole, define a states



defense orientation. First, however, a brief discussion of the position of the military relative to the governmental decision making process is necessary; again, to illustrate the differences between the individual ASEAN states.

#### B. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Zakaria Haji Ahmad, in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, identifies three archetypes of civil-military relations in the region, two of which are applicable to ASEAN. They are, "(1) non-communist countries in which the military has intervened or is in authority, (2) non-communist countries in which the military is subservient to the civilian authorities in varying degrees, ..." <sup>107</sup> He places Indonesia and Thailand in the first category with Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Brunei in the second. <sup>108</sup> Although these groupings are acceptable for broad generalizations, they fail to address, as Zakaria readily admits, the causes and effects of these orientations and their impact on internal, intraregional, and extraregional policy. To be sure, there are similarities which warrant generalization, but there are

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<sup>107</sup>Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Configurative and Comparative Aspects of Military-Civilian Relations," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, eds. Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Harold Crouch, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>108</sup>Ahmad, "Configurative and Comparative," 6.

also significant differences which require broader analysis.<sup>109</sup>

### 1. Thailand

Thailand is a nation with a strong martial heritage. This has been particularly true since the coup which occurred in June of 1932 where rule by princes was replaced by rule by generals.<sup>110</sup> As a consequence of the leading role played by the military in Thai politics, the nation has witnessed many coups and coup attempts over the years. In fact, since 1936 there have been 15 coups and 13 constitutions.<sup>111</sup> As Zakaria Ahmad has noted, these "[S]uccessful military interventions usually resulted in the abrogation of constitutions, abolition of parliaments, and suspension of participant political activity."<sup>112</sup> The result of this chronic cycle of political upheaval has been that participatory political institutions are perceived as weak and have a low level of legitimacy.<sup>113</sup> "Changes of the government and political leadership are more

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<sup>109</sup>Civil-Military relations in Brunei will not be explored in depth due to lack of information and the very limited role of the Brunei armed forces.

<sup>110</sup>Chai-Anan Samudavanija and Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Thailand," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, 78.

<sup>111</sup>Defense and Foreign Affairs Handbook, 930.

<sup>112</sup>Samudavanija, "Thailand," 78.

<sup>113</sup>Samudavanija, "Thailand," 79.

often through coups than elections."<sup>114</sup> However, in February 1990, there was an indication that the military might be willing to distance itself from direct participation in the political process. According to Armed Forces Chief of Staff, General Sunthon Khongsomphong,

In a few years, the presence of senators in parliament will end. Military senators will refrain from political involvement, concentrating on national development. If they want to enter politics they must resign and run for parliamentary seats. It is necessary to educate people about democracy so they will properly understand politics. Soldiers will gradually withdraw themselves; senior military officers have discussed the issue and understand this.<sup>115</sup>

Of course, the bloodless coup launched by the "National Peacekeeping Council" (NPC) on 24 February 1991, overthrowing the Chatichai government, demonstrates a continuing desire on the part of the Armed Forces to be deeply involved in the political affairs of state.

## **2. Indonesia**

Quite distinct from the case in Thailand, the Indonesian army cut its teeth and gained a measure of legitimacy, in terms of its political role, in the battle for independence fought against the Dutch immediately following World War II. As a result, "the basic orientation of military

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<sup>114</sup>Samudavanija, "Thailand," 79.

<sup>115</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-036, "Armed Forces Chief Predicts Military's Future," 22 February 1990, 65.

officers has been political from the very beginning.... they were motivated by the desire to participate in the nationalist struggle against colonialism."<sup>116</sup> The ineffectiveness of Sukarno's "Guided-Democracy," coupled with the Army's perception that Sukarno was getting too close to local communist groups, and failed economic policies, led to a coup in 1965 since which time the Army, led by General Suharto, has been firmly in control.

### 3. Malaysia

That the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) have not assumed a greater direct role in the political affairs of state is a tribute to the high degree of institutionalization and sense of order inherited from the British. This is especially significant in light of the fact that, like Indonesia, most of Malaysia's problems are internal and the MAF, before and since independence (in 1957), has played a leading role in combating insurgencies or quelling racial unrest--it appears that the opportunity has been there for the MAF to expand the scope of its role. And yet, "[T]hroughout the country's post-independence travails and even before then, the role of the armed forces has been clearly defined in terms of internal and external defence missions and clearly subservient vis-a-vis the civilian authorities.... This is clearly stated in the

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<sup>116</sup>Harold Crouch, "Indonesia," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, 50.

1957 and Malaysia (1963) Constitutions where the MAF is described in Article 132 as a 'federal public service'.<sup>117</sup> Another significant factor that has contributed to maintaining a stable relationship between the civilian government and the MAF is the continued involvement of the British in Malaysian defense since independence, first through the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA), and later the Five-Power Defence Agreement (FPDA).<sup>118</sup>

#### 4. Singapore

The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) were created after Singapore seceded from Malaysia in 1965.<sup>119</sup> Several factors have been responsible for maintaining the "undisputed predominance of the civilian sector over the military."<sup>120</sup> First, the duties and responsibilities of the newly formed SAF were dictated by Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's authoritarian, but popular leader from before formal independence until just recently--strong civilian control predated the formation of the SAF. Second, the predominantly Chinese culture does not value military institutions as highly as it does civilian.

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<sup>117</sup>Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Malaysia," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, 119-120.

<sup>118</sup>Ahmad, "Indonesia," 125-126.

<sup>119</sup>Chan Heng Chee, "Singapore," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, 136-139.

<sup>120</sup>Chee, "Singapore," 136.

Third, the development of the officer corps stresses collegial relations within its ranks; an unlikely setting from which a military strongman might emerge.<sup>121</sup>

### 5. Philippines

On the surface, the history of military-civilian relations in the Philippines appears similar to that of Malaysia. As part of their colonial legacy, a subordinate role for the military to civilian authority was institutionalized. Additionally, they both have ties to extraregional powers who have, to varying degrees, served as the military arm responsible for external defense. As a result, the military, in this case the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), has been able to concentrate on countering internal threats, of which there have been no shortage.

The reality is that the institutional boundaries which demarcated civilian-military roles began to be eroded after 1950, with the advent of the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) and other civic action programs of the AFP.<sup>122</sup> Thus began a long period of civil-military relations that were characterized by the increasing ability of the military to exercise "influence" in political affairs. The advent of martial law in 1972 under President Marcos saw military

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<sup>121</sup>Chee, "Singapore," 137-154.

<sup>122</sup>Carolina G. Hernandez, "The Philippines," in Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia, 190-191.

"influence" give way to military "participation" in politics.<sup>123</sup> "With respect to the permeation of military-civilian institutional boundaries, since 1972 the role expansion of the military has given the military a share in the management of national development programmes and of industries and business enterprises, a share in the administration of justice, in addition to security, law and order and civic action work."<sup>124</sup>

It is the depth to which the military has involved itself in political affairs that makes governing by Corazon Aquino so problematic. Not only does she face real internal threats such as the communist insurgency and the religious separatists, but she must also face a faction-ridden, highly politicized AFP whose loyalty is divided at best.

Though these brief portraits of civil-military relations in the ASEAN states are by no means comprehensive, they are sufficient to illustrate the differences in orientation which would have to be overcome before a collective security regime could be successfully launched. However, beyond the basic problem of overcoming differences in the orientation of the military to the politics of each nation lie the difficulties inherent in: assimilating different

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<sup>123</sup>Hernandez, "The Philippines," 191.

<sup>124</sup>Hernandez, "The Philippines," 191.

defense philosophies, internal versus external orientations; contrasting perceptions on the value of military interrelationships, particularly with extraregional powers; and, divergent threat perceptions which influence the direction of arms purchases.

### **C. EVOLUTION OF DEFENSE ORIENTATIONS**

The issue of "unilateralism existing in a multilateral framework," especially with regards to security concerns, is not a new phenomenon in ASEAN. There are more overt signs that national self-interest is overcoming group interest in its effect on security planning--such as Singapore's recent offer to host a limited number of U.S. forces, a move described by some of its ASEAN colleagues as overly self-serving. However, the roots of this change predate the end of the Cold War in Asia, the concomitant drawdown of U.S. forces that will inevitably occur, and even the progress made on the Cambodia issue. The key to the evolution of security concerns in ASEAN has been the level or direction of economic development experienced over the last twenty years which has influenced defense budgets and military orientation. For the most part, the manifestation of these evolving security concerns has been a change from primarily a preoccupation with internal security problems to a broader realization of



external security threats and vulnerabilities. Sheldon Simon notes several additional reasons for this change:

(1) the atrophy of communist insurgent groups in the late 1970s following the split between China and Vietnam and increased political and economic stability within ASEAN societies (excepting the Philippines); (2) concern in Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia particularly about the military capabilities and intentions of Soviet-supplied Vietnam after its invasion of Cambodia; and (3) the realization that to defend and exploit 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) is[sic] air and maritime surveillance required.<sup>125</sup>

Of course, internal unrest is not isolated only to the Philippines and the fears engendered by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978 are no longer as great as they once were. What rationale is there that can explain the continuation of authoritarianism or direct military rule in ASEAN? In Indonesia for example, a central rationale used by the army to justify its dominance of the political scene is its claim that it serves a "dual function," i.e., it has both an economic and a civil role. The Armed Forces in Thailand share a similar orientation.

The idea that the military can serve "dual functions" is not unique to Indonesia and Thailand. In ASEAN the distinction between national defense forces and constabulary or paramilitary forces is often blurred. In reality a continuum exists in ASEAN where the defense orientations of

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<sup>125</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 584.

the military forces range from almost completely external to almost completely internal. On one extreme, Singapore, the most advanced of the ASEAN economies, adheres to the "poisoned shrimp" philosophy; the idea that it will make itself so strong militarily that any attack on it would be unpalatable to the would-be aggressor. Although, M. Shuhud Saaid has noted that "it is hardly a defence-oriented fighting force, its war fighting war-winning doctrine being that of the preemptive strike, and its strategy being to defend the country as far forward as possible."<sup>126</sup> On the other extreme, in the Philippines the AFP are as much policemen as soldiers. It is "[T]he only ASEAN state whose military remains devoted exclusively to counterinsurgency ..."<sup>127</sup> The level of civil unrest in the Philippines is so high that both soldiers and policemen drill together in "anti-tank warfare and street battle techniques ... in preparation for possible coup attempts by rightest forces."<sup>128</sup> Further, defense officials talk of "the need to update the integrated defense plans of cities and municipalities in order to further check rebel attacks on town halls, police stations, and military

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<sup>126</sup>M. Shuhud Saaid, "The Singapore Army," Asian Defence Journal (June 1987): 18.

<sup>127</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 585.

<sup>128</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-006, "Further Report," 9 January 1990, 55.

detachments."<sup>129</sup> The defense orientations of the other ASEAN states fall on this continuum between these extremes. The distinctive feature of this continuum in ASEAN is that there appears to be a correlation between the magnitude of the internal security problem, the level of economic development, and the orientation of the military forces. It is chiefly the orientation of the defense forces in these states that dictates the pattern of military modernization.

#### **D. ARMS PROCUREMENT**

Perhaps the most obvious indication that the ASEAN states are, for the most part, expanding their defense horizons is in the pattern of arms procurement and production witnessed in the last decade. As Sheldon Simon notes, "[B]y the late 1980s, ASEAN governments had acquired respectable regional power projection forces, and several states were also upgrading their air and naval inventories in anticipation of maritime defense needs in the 1990s."<sup>130</sup> Here again, though the concept of "defence for development" is generally accepted among the ASEAN states as a rationale for expanding defense budgets, there are certainly other considerations which may or may not be unique to the individual states. The particular

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<sup>129</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-082, "Improved Defense Measures Sought at Meeting," 27 April 1990, 37.

<sup>130</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 584.

development requirements of a state and its own peculiar threat perceptions also have a hand in determining the path that military modernization may take.

In Malaysia, the force modernization, which includes the acquisition of advanced fighter aircraft, two submarines, artillery, SAM's, and air defense radars is "motivated by concerns over the Soviet naval buildup at Cam Ranh Bay, concern over Vietnam's intentions in the South China Sea, and China's growing blue water capability--all in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur's offshore oil and gas production wells near the disputed Spratly Islands."<sup>131</sup> Thailand has acquired U.S. F-16's that could be used to hit Vietnamese targets and "has also made arrangements for a \$100 million joint weapons stockpile with the United States."<sup>132</sup> It appears then, that Vietnam's departure from Cambodia has done little to diminish Thailand's concern with potential threats emanating from beyond its borders. As well, Singapore has made significant investments in upgrading its military forces, particularly its maritime surveillance and air interceptor capabilities.<sup>133</sup> Overall, defense expenditures in the ASEAN states have

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<sup>131</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 584.

<sup>132</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 585, Thailand has also entered into a weapons stockpiling agreement with China.

<sup>133</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-046, "Armed Forces To Buy Maritime Patrol Aircraft," 8 March 1990, 37.

increased dramatically in the last ten years. According to SIPRI statistics, defense budgets in the ASEAN states from 1980 to 1989 have risen as follows: Brunei up 39%; Indonesia up 98%; Malaysia up 37%; the Philippines up 182%; Singapore up 132%; and Thailand up 65%.<sup>134</sup>

The effects of the force modernization have not been without impact within the Association--a testimony to the problems of "unilateralism existing in a multilateral framework." Huxley claims that one of the most important factors behind the rush to increase defense capabilities is intra-ASEAN competition.<sup>135</sup> Suchit Bunbongkarn of Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University has called this "a kind of prestige-driven arms race."<sup>136</sup> A case in point is the delivery of F-16's to Thailand which ended a mad scramble to determine who among the ASEAN states would be the first to receive the planes--Singapore and Indonesia have since received their orders.<sup>137</sup> In the Philippines, Foreign Affairs Secretary Manglapus has urged his government to keep pace with the

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<sup>134</sup>SIPRI Yearbook 1990: World Armaments and Disarmament, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 188. The dramatic growth of the Philippine defense budget reflects increased civil unrest and higher rents paid by the U.S. for Subic and Clark et al.

<sup>135</sup>Huxley, "Internal Security," 182.

<sup>136</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-033, "Article Analyzes Military's Political Role," 16 February 1990, 80.

<sup>137</sup>M Shuhud Saa'id, "RTAF F-16s A Southeast Asian First," Asian Defence Journal (August 1988): 35-38.

defense improvements undertaken by the other Association members, most notably Malaysia. "We should take our own steps to make sure that any build-up on the part of neighboring countries does not result in any uneven situation."<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Indonesia has expressed concern over Thailand's agreement with China on arms stockpiling, fearing that those weapons could be used by the Khmer Rouge to perpetuate the internal crisis in Cambodia.<sup>139</sup> Though these are just two examples, they underscore the fact that there is not a unified defense philosophy within ASEAN that has been able to override national self-interest. Nevertheless, there are areas where defense cooperation exists.

#### **E. MILITARY INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

ASEAN itself is not a military organization nor was it ever intended to become one. However, this does not mean that military and security cooperation have been absent from the realm of intra-Association relations. Indeed, since "the collapse of Saigon in 1975, the states of ASEAN have engaged in security and military cooperation, with the latter primarily on a bilateral basis and the former on the basis of concerted regional action in the political and diplomatic

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<sup>138</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-087, "Manglapus Urges Keeping Pace," 4 May 1990, 27.

<sup>139</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 585.

arenas."<sup>140</sup> Security cooperation, which need not have a military component, has been most visibly represented in ASEAN by the generally unified and consistent political stance taken by the memberstates on the Cambodia issue. Military cooperation has been far less unified; although, the number of bilateral military exercises within ASEAN has increased over the last decade. Exercises between Malaysia and Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei, Thailand and Indonesia, and Thailand and Malaysia are among those that have been characterized by increasing frequency and level of forces participating.<sup>141</sup> There has been as well, a move toward sharing training facilities and even allowing smaller partners to operate their own installations in other states. For instance, Singapore has training sites in Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines.<sup>142</sup>

However, "the bilateral arrangements that have emerged are non-comprehensive in terms of the potential pairings,..."<sup>143</sup> the Philippines being notably absent. There is also concern

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<sup>140</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 30.

<sup>141</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 586.

<sup>142</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 584.

<sup>143</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 32, citing D. Weatherbee, "Obstacles and Possibilities in ASEAN Defence Cooperation: The Strategic Imperatives," Paper Read at the ADJ Forum, 3.

among the more outward-oriented members regarding the reliability of a "greater ASEAN" military cooperative. Indeed, in Singapore, Second Defense Minister (Service), Lee Hsien Loong, indicated that defense relations were tied to overall relations. "If the overall relations were good, defense ties would naturally prosper.... if problems cropped up,... relations would be similarly affected."<sup>144</sup> Thus, "cooperation is not likely to go beyond bilateral exercises as 'the fear is that when partners fall out, it will leave a complete gap in maintenance, and therefore war-fighting capability, in any intra-ASEAN dispute.'"<sup>145</sup>

This is precisely why military ties to extraregional powers exist, such as Malaysia and Singapore (with the likely addition of Brunei) linked with Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand under the Five Power Defence Agreement (FPDA), and of Thailand and the Philippines linked with the United States under the Manila Pact. In fact, given the emergence of some of the most modern weapons systems in the Western inventory in ASEAN military forces--the F-16's and the E-2's in particular--links with advanced, extraregional powers probably provide better training opportunities than would exercises involving

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<sup>144</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-052, "Bilateral, Defense Ties with Neighbors Viewed," 16 March 1990, 30.

<sup>145</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 32, citing J. N. Mak, "ASEAN Air Cooperation: An Appraisal," paper read at the ADJ Forum.



only ASEAN forces. Also, as Zakaria Ahmad rightly points out, the deterrent value of exercises with and formal military ties to major extraregional powers far exceeds that of any bilateral or multilateral ASEAN relationship.<sup>146</sup>

In the final analysis, military relationships involving ASEAN members, whether they be bilateral commitments within the Association or alliances with an extraregional power, are entered into to serve national interests or to counter particular threats. If two or more of the Association members have like concerns, sympathetic needs, or shared threat perceptions that can be resolved through military cooperation, then a bilateral or trilateral arrangement within the framework of ASEAN might be realized. If, however, national security interests cannot be met by entering into a bilateral defense arrangement with another memberstate, then a partnership with an extraregional actor will be sought.

The fact that there are agreements such as the FPDA and the Manila Pact that still serve as the basis for continued extraregional military presence in Southeast Asia suggest that there are defense and security issues in the region that cannot be met through strictly intra-ASEAN cooperation. Political obstacles such as boundary disputes, competing territorial claims over EEZ's, and lack of consensus on a

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<sup>146</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 32.

common enemy outside of Vietnam will continue to serve as roadblocks to greater ASEAN military integration, and increase the likelihood that extraregional military relationships will need to remain an aspect of the overall Southeast Asian defense picture.

As a product of different histories, cultures, and socio-political-economic development patterns, ASEAN is not a homogeneous organization. In its early stages, when all of the members were experiencing economic and political growing pains, ASEAN was often able to forge consensus on issues because of a shared sense of weakness. However, due to variances in the pace of economic growth, and different levels of success in combating internal unrest, the interest and goal horizons of the members began to diverge; some expanding and some contracting. This process has effected changes in threat perceptions and military orientations; further adding to the heterogeneity of the Association, and limiting prospects for consensus.

For the future, "national political considerations will dictate whether military or security cooperation will take place..."<sup>147</sup> within ASEAN. By implication, it must then be acknowledged that military cooperation will be a derivative of shared interests and common concerns. If this premise is to

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<sup>147</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 30.

be the basis for significant military cooperation in ASEAN, then inevitably the future of such cooperation within the Association will be highly fragmented.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Soviet retrenchment, the "liberation" of Eastern Europe, and the CSCE agreement are all indications that the Cold War is over. In Asia, Moscow's willingness to sever aid flows to Vietnam and its political and economic overtures to South Korea and Japan provide further evidence that the Soviet Union is no longer willing or able to isolate itself politically and economically from the "democratic" industrialized nations it has opposed over the last 45 years. Certainly, a little backslapping among Western leaders would seem justified, particularly in the United States where the burden of anti-communist rhetoric and action had assumed the guise of a moral obligation. Clearly, our strategy has been vindicated. Some might think that the United States has earned the right to pull itself out of the game and direct its attentions to its pressing domestic problems. Others, particularly President Bush, think the time is right to press America's advantage vis-a-vis our old foe(new friend?) and resolve the remaining issues which stand between us and the New World Order (NWO). Can we do both?

The United States has emerged from the rigors of the Cold War struggle as the most powerful actor, both militarily and economically, in the community of nations; it is unarguably

the only true superpower in the world today. However, United States policy-makers must quickly move beyond the static assumptions that underlaid national strategy planning during the Cold War era. No prudent security strategist should content himself solely with the empirical evidence of national strengths and capabilities, foregoing a deeper examination of equally important needs, interests, and weaknesses that must be factored into the national strategy equation. Additionally, in a period of radical and rapid change within the international community, any strategy based on the old maxim, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," will surely lead to misuse of national resources, misguided foreign policy initiatives, and inevitably, missed opportunities for advancing the national agenda. This is not, however, an argument for wholesale changes. Rather, it is merely a recommendation that the United States recognize that the opportunities presented to the nation by the dramatic changes that have occurred over the last few years afford us a measure of flexibility which has heretofore been absent in developing the national agenda.

The problem, of course, is articulating just exactly what constitutes the national agenda and determining how it fits in the New World Order. Fortunately for U.S. strategists, the international community of nations is still in a state of flux following the shockingly abrupt ending of the Cold War and the

NWO is an evolving rubric under which the U.S. would like to place the era following that of the Cold War. The implication is that U.S. policymakers are now presented with many options as they attempt to outline the goals and objectives of our post-Cold War national strategy. Thus, given the preeminent position of the United States today, the decisions made by its strategists will, in effect, define the NWO and substantially influence the direction of interstate relations well into the 21st Century. However, a critical preface to policy decisions that will be made to give form and substance to the NWO must be acceptance of the relative decline of U.S. power across the entire spectrum of interstate relations vis-a-vis our friends and allies. Unlike the Cold War era, it will not be possible, nor should it be desirable, for the United States to establish unilateral dominion over the political, economic, and military agendas of the international community. Certainly though, given the breadth and depth of U.S. capabilities across the board, it is in a unique position to exercise a significant leadership role in giving international legitimacy to the substance of the NWO.

An important question American strategists must ask as the U.S. prepares to define the NWO is what role should the United States seek to play in that Order? What obligations and responsibilities is the U.S. willing and able to accept? Perhaps equally important is the issue of how the U.S. will

manage the transition period it is now entering--what actions must America take to ensure its long-term goals are achieved? Should the U.S. be content, during the transition period and into the future, to be willing to act militarily as the first option in defense of the political-economic ideals it hopes will undergird the NWO? The current situation in the Middle East would seem to indicate, for the moment at least, that the United States may be one of only a few nations capable of doing so. Should America push to internationalize the burden of defense of our (the world's?) ideals? The success President Bush had in putting together the multinational coalition in the war against Iraq seems to indicate that some of these ideals are shared by others willing to accept the sacrifice that necessarily accompanies such action, be it in the political, economic, or military realm. Or, should the United States take the opportunity given by the "collapse" of the Soviet threat to limit the scope of its global security concerns and focus its attentions along more narrowly defined national interests? Failure to choose the proper path in a given circumstance might well help to precipitate an irreversible decline of U.S. political, economic, and military strength. As Paul Kennedy warns:

Although the United States is at present still in a class of its own economically and perhaps even militarily, it cannot avoid confronting the two great tests which challenge the longevity of every major power that occupies the "number one" position

in world affairs: whether, in the military/strategic realm, it can preserve a reasonable balance between the nation's perceived defense requirements and the means it possesses to maintain those commitments; and whether, as an intimately related point, it can preserve the technological and economic bases of its power from relative erosion in the face of ever-shifting patterns of global production. This test of American abilities will be the greater because it, like Imperial Spain around 1600 or the British Empire around 1900, is the inheritor of a vast array of strategical commitments which had been made decades earlier, when the nation's political, economic, and military capacity to influence world affairs seemed so much more assured. In consequence, the United States now runs the risk, so familiar to historians of the rise and fall of previous Great Powers, of what might roughly be called "imperial overstretch": that is to say, decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them all simultaneously.<sup>148</sup>

Of course, an examination of the "United States' global interests and obligations" is well beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, attention has been directed to analyzing some of the elements that have influenced the peculiar and somewhat paradoxical United States-ASEAN security relationship. The peculiar nature of this relationship stems from the rather disparate views of the Association's members regarding extraregional security ties. As has been shown, there is uneven support for the idea that the Association should strive to create in their region a Zone of Peace,

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<sup>148</sup>Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (New York: Randor House, 1987), 514-515.



Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). In lieu of the attainment of this objective, virtually all of the ASEAN states have recognized the advantage of having a tacit security arrangement with a benign extraregional actor--principally the United States. Yet there appears to be an inconsistent, overt willingness among the memberstates, save the recent Singaporean offer, to provide the facilities necessary for a long-term relationship based primarily on security considerations. Indeed, in the Philippines, the issue of base access for U.S. forces appears to be strictly a monetary concern.

As this thesis has illustrated, from the U.S. perspective, its role in the framework of ASEAN security developed more as a by-product of the U.S. presence in the region rather than an objective of its presence. Granted, the United States does have formal security ties with Thailand and the Philippines but they are grounded in strategic assumptions that no longer appear to be militarily viable considerations.

Essentially, Southeast Asia's strategic position at the nexus of our Northeast Asian and Southwest Asian interests has, by default, provided it security coverage under America's forward deployed military strategy. That is not to say that the United States has not actively pursued policies aimed at enhancing the security of ASEAN, it is merely an acknowledgement that any such initiatives were more than

likely derivative of greater interests elsewhere.<sup>149</sup> Of course, the U.S. view of ASEAN security has evolved to the point where the Association is now considered, according to Secretary Solomon, "one of the pillars of U.S. relations with the Pacific ..."

The paradox of the relationship is that, on the one hand, the United States provides to the ASEAN states something they need and want--namely security from hostile extraregional intrusion and the freedom to focus national resources on internal development. On the other hand, the United States also stands as the most visible representation of what some ASEAN states, particularly Indonesia, would ostensibly prefer to see end--armed extraregional activity within the confines of the ZOPFAN. Likewise, to the United States, ASEAN represents--for the most part--the type of political and economic success that it has sought to promote and nurture over the last 45 years. And yet today, the United States is finding it increasingly difficult to accept the economic challenge presented by the dramatic growth of these nations. However, as the U.S. attempts to redefine its role in the region, it must be mindful of the precedent it has set in establishing the baseline from which ASEAN's security has evolved. As this thesis has attempted to show, the U.S.

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<sup>149</sup>LaFeber, The American Age, 520.

military presence and Japanese economic participation are indivisible elements of the Southeast Asian security picture. Any proposed change in the role of the United States in the region must accommodate this fact. According to Paul Wolfowitz, the U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, "[T]he bottom line is that while we can adjust our force levels and we plan to do so, we must maintain a credible presence in this region if we wish to remain a world power, to protect our national interest, and to preserve a secure environment in which democracy and free economies can prosper."<sup>150</sup>

The role that the United States has had in the orchestration of ASEAN security has been a relatively easy part to play largely because U.S. strategists have not had to tailor the performance to fit the scene. To use a metaphor, for the past 45 years, the world has been America's stage and the spotlight has been on the U.S. as it took the lead in trying to contain the spread of "Soviet-sponsored" communism. Wherever there was a challenge from the Soviets or their surrogates, U.S. strategists dusted off a proven script and went into action. To be sure, there were subtle variations, some ad-libbing here and there, but for the most part, seldom was there deviation from the general text. Of course, that

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<sup>150</sup>Susumu Awanohara, "Flurry of Signals," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 May 1990, 10.

worked well when America had a clearly recognizable foe. Today, however, it would appear that most of our preconceived notions regarding "the threat" and security have been overcome by events. Not surprisingly, then, U.S. leadership is having a difficult time adjusting to the New World Order and defining the role that the United States will play in that order. This is especially problematic in the United States because it is, arguably, the only nation with truly "global" interests--a consideration that has helped to rationalize and justify its efforts to assume global responsibilities. The major hurdle faced by the United States, particularly in terms of security strategy, will be to break down its "global" mentality, which has tended to dictate its responses to all security issues, into its component parts--regionalize the United States' future security strategies based on bottom-line assessments of its interests and threats to them, while taking into consideration the needs and expectations of potential security partners. Toward that end, Southeast Asia and the future security of ASEAN presents some unique problems.

Traditionally, the United States has viewed the security of ASEAN as dependent upon two things: (1) continued economic growth and viability; and (2) stable internal environments. In regard to the former, U.S. policies in support of the economic development of ASEAN, with the concomitant contributions of the Japanese, have been hugely successful--

the Philippines being the notable exception. As to the latter, the over arching U.S. presence in the region throughout much of the post-World War II period has allowed the ASEAN states to direct their own security and defense forces inward to help put down insurrections or separatist movements thereby enhancing internal security,<sup>151</sup> a necessary precondition to economic development. Today, with the same notable exception, the ASEAN states are enjoying relatively stable internal environments and generally successful economies. Overall, then, U.S. policy regarding security and stability in the region has been successful--from the perspective of the United States. However, a key issue for the future is whether or not the factors for instability have been eradicated by U.S. policy or just deferred. In some circles within ASEAN, Indonesia in particular, the end of the Cold War means "that this perception that a threat from the north exists should be removed because Japan, Vietnam, and probably China, in reality, could not easily attack ..."<sup>152</sup> In others, such as Singapore, there is "anxiety that withdrawal of the superpowers from South-East Asia could prompt Asian nations with strong forces--particularly Japan,

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<sup>151</sup>Singh, "The United States in Southeast Asia," 54.

<sup>152</sup>FBIS-EAS-90-055, "Perception of Threat from North said 'Outdated'," 21 March 1990, 30.

China and India--to take their place."<sup>153</sup> Such division over the nature of the threat may be symptomatic of deeper rifts within the Association. The American policy of containment--the exclusion or buffering of potentially disruptive extraregional influences--may have neglected to address the intraregional disputes; issues which may pose a far greater obstacle to lasting regional peace and stability than extraregional threats.

With the impending military decline of the U.S. in the region, the inclination to "paper over" disputes may wane as group interests are overcome by national self-interest. As Wong Kan Seng, Singapore's Foreign Minister noted, conflict in Southeast Asia has traditionally been rooted in indigenous frictions.<sup>154</sup> As a consequence of these developments we see, particularly in the more advanced economies, but not isolated strictly to them, arms purchases and defense postures that are becoming increasingly oriented toward their external environment.<sup>155</sup> What does this trend toward external defense orientations in ASEAN mean to the United States? Does the increasing ability of the majority of the ASEAN states to project their defense resources in support of their national

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<sup>153</sup>Richardson, "No Role for the Japanese Military," 11.

<sup>154</sup>Richardson, "Breaking down the Asian barriers," 24.

<sup>155</sup>Simon, "ASEAN Security in the 1990's," 585.

interests obviate the need for a U.S. military presence in the region? It would appear not, particularly since there is strong resistance within the Association to the formation of a formal collective security organization.<sup>156</sup>

If the events of the last two years--Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia, the crumbling of the Soviet empire, Soviet overtures to Korea and Japan, and the suspension of Soviet aid to Vietnam--are defined as the end of the Cold War in Asia, then the justification for a large-scale U.S. military presence in the region has become anachronistic. However, the U.S. must also be cognizant of the vulnerabilities of the ASEAN states to potentially disruptive internal, intraregional, and extraregional influences. Given ASEAN's poor track record of military cooperation within the Association<sup>157</sup>, a strong case could be made that in lieu of a unifying threat, e.g., Vietnam, the memberstates might find it increasingly in their best interest to "go it alone" and cut deals with potential adversaries. In terms of security, "Association politics" might very well give way to the unilateralist approach. Nevertheless, as long as the United States has national interests stretching from Southwest Asia

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<sup>156</sup>Michael Vatikiotis, "Time to rethink," Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 March 1991, 19.

<sup>157</sup>Ahmad, "Future Patterns of ASEAN Regional Security Cooperation," 28.

to Northwest Asia, it will have a vested interest in preventing the potentially destabilizing disintegration of ASEAN--using whatever means are available and suitable for meeting the minimum requirements for regional stability and access. Yet, a U.S. military security blanket should not be available for the region's actors to use as a cover for not addressing the existing, but suppressed, divisive issues among them. For the future then, the United States should shed its "defense pact" mentality and support a greater Pacific security forum along the lines of the CSCE. Naysayers might claim that similar proposals have, in the past, died on the vine because of the region's size, and diversity--politically, economically, and culturally. Certainly, these are not insignificant challenges to the successful fruition of such a grandiose scheme. However, a "New World Order" implies radical change from assumptions previously held regarding the nature and method of interstate relations. To be sure, achieving a "New World Order" will not be a panacea which will resolve all international problems. What it might give the United States, though, is the opportunity to address its national needs unburdened by the constraints attendant in marshalling its resources to meet a "global" contingency.



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